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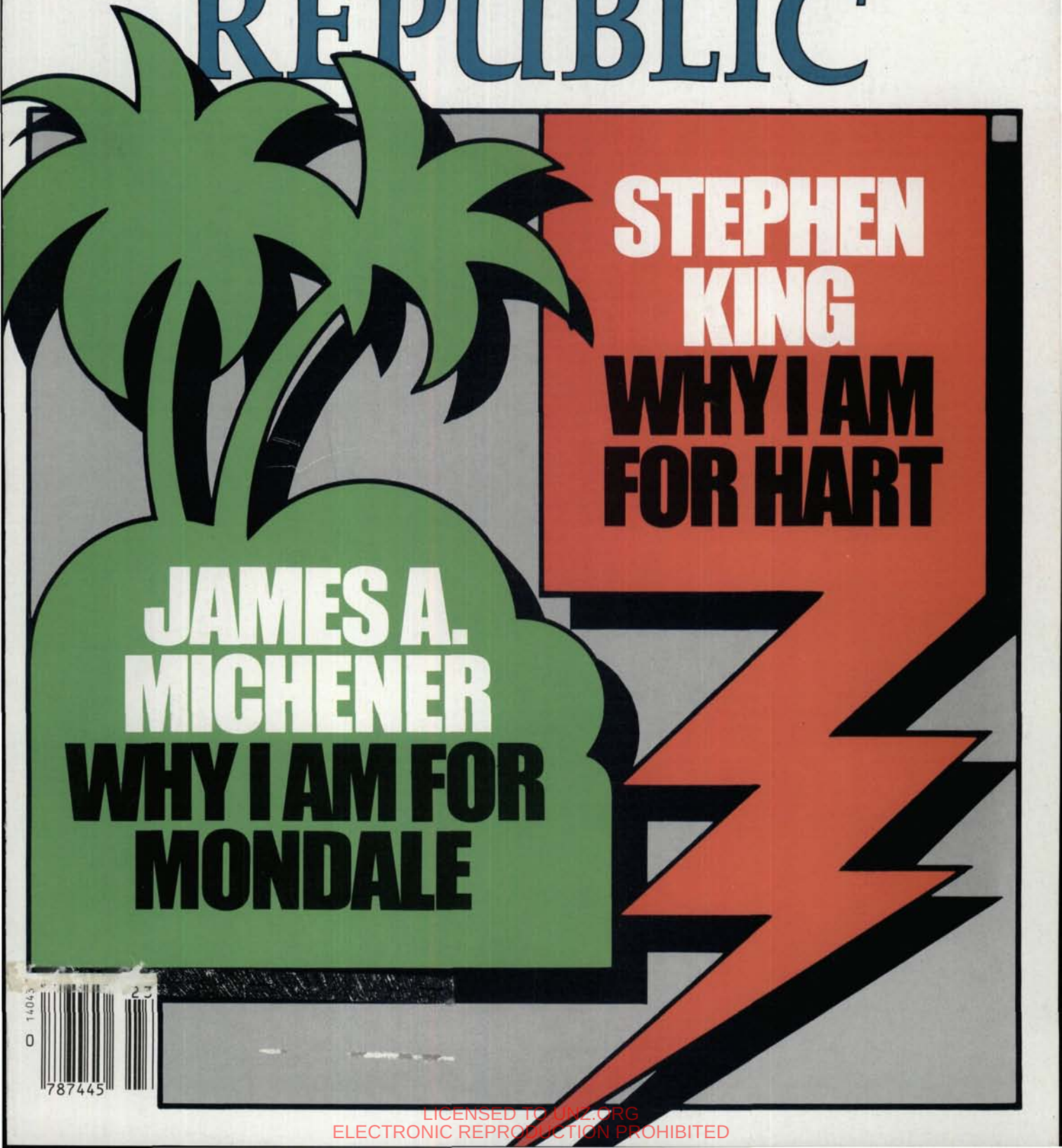

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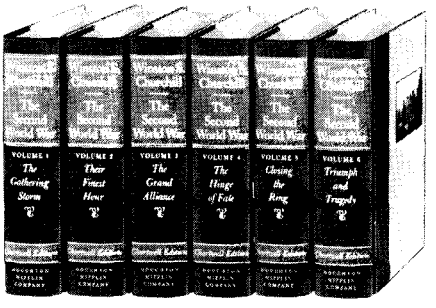

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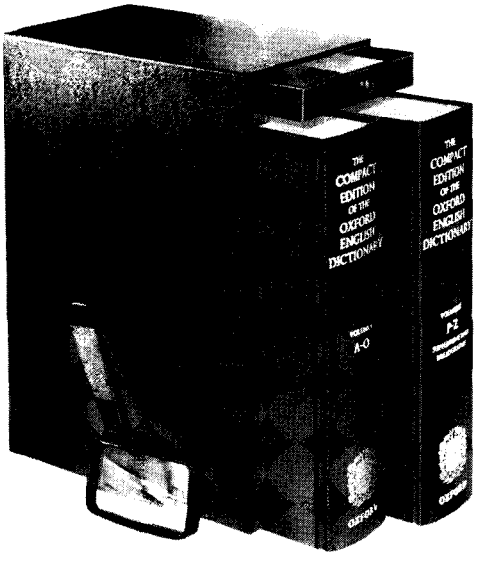

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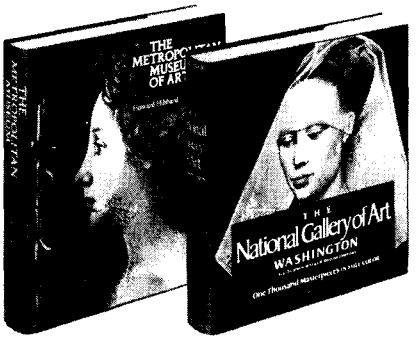

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CORRESPONDENCE

IN JACKSON'S CORNER

To the editors:

Enough is enough. I have winced through your prior treatment of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, but "Rainbow's End" (TNR, April 30) was the final straw. Mr. Jackson's candidacy is one of hope and—through the registration and invigoration of black voters—tremendous benefit to the nation. The only "agony imposed by Jackson's campaign" is in the consciences of self-conscious liberals like yourselves whose pleas for the empowerment of blacks ring hollow now that the stakes are real.

Certainly, Mr. Jackson has made mistakes in his campaign. No coming of age, no new and vigorous movement, is without its mistakes and missteps. It is ludicrous, however, to label these actions "contemptible," "an American tragedy," and to insist that they render "bitterness and division . . . inevitable." Such slurs are understandable only as an effort to reconcile your theoretical support of a larger political role for blacks in America with bitter attacks on the most important black leader since Martin Luther King Jr.

In the final analysis, what TNR cannot stomach is Mr. Jackson's evangelical spirit, his independence of the white (or black) liberal establishment, and his opposition to the pro-Israel policies defended by TNR. This political opposition is masked by complaints about Mr. Jackson's "civility." In other words, this black leader is just too uppity.

ERIC J. MOGILNICKI
New Haven, Connecticut

To the editors:

Your portrayal of the interracial harmony that Jesse Jackson is supposedly destroying represents a self-serving, pious hypocrisy that is difficult to abide. Your race-baiting suggests that Jackson has racially polarized politics by providing blacks an opportunity to vote for a black for the Presidency of the United States. While blacks routinely vote for whites, how many whites are willing to vote for a black? Jimmy Carter received over 90 percent of the black vote. Can any of America's black elected officials make a similar claim in terms of their white support?

Your editorial shows no sensitivity to the fundamental needs and aspirations of a people whose future is inextricably tied to America's. If so-called liberals do everything in their power to maintain "plantation politics" as opposed to recognizing blacks as full partners, then what is the hope? What is the future?

ROBERT G. NEWBY
Pontiac, Michigan

ABORTION AGREEMENT

To the editors:

I share Peter L. Berger's hope that the hostility pervading both sides of the abortion debate could evolve into "a new national consensus" ("Life Choices," TNR, April 30). But I would like to suggest that we already have the basis for such a consensus, not only because both sides "cherish the . . . dignity and worth of the individual," but also because both sides do not want either abortion or children who are not wanted by their parents. Why can't all of us, regardless of whether we favor the right of abortion, cooperate on creating those conditions that make abortion unnecessary?

A first step in such a program was taken two years ago by the National Coalition of American Nuns when they announced that, although they agreed with their church's position on the immorality of abortion, they would not support any legal punishment for those who chose abortion. Instead, the nuns would devote their efforts to create the kind of environment that would encourage women "to bring new life into the world." This environment would include not only better nutrition and health care for pregnant women, but also education "in ways of being creatively responsible . . . for avoiding unwanted pregnancies."

Such a program would not, of course, resolve the philosophical debate. But what millions of young people in our country need now is less a solution to a moral problem than immediate help in stemming the increase in unwanted pregnancies. By keeping the philosophical dispute in the background, both sides can not only cooperate in helping those who need help, but create the kind of consensus that Mr. Berger envisions in his excellent essay.

LAWRENCE W. HYMAN
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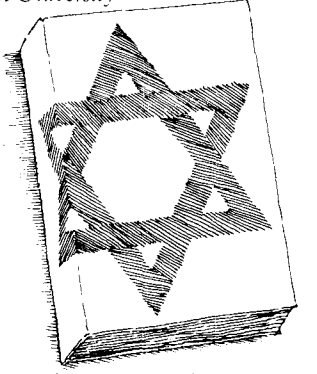

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

ISSUE 3,620

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 4, 1984

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Volume 190, Number 22, Issue 3,620, June 4, 1984. (Printed on May 16, 1984.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated January 9 & 16, July 16 & 23, August 13 & 20, and September 17 & 24, 1984) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $45; foreign, $67; Canada, $55. Back issues, $2 (includes postage & handling). ©1984 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC. Indexed in Readers' Guide and Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscriptions inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 955, Farmingdale, NY 11737-0001.** For subscription problems call **800-645-9559** (In New York State call 800-732-9119).

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FROM WASHINGTON

C.I.A. PAC

Just about everyone is pleased by the election results in El Salvador, where José Napoleón Duarte defeated Roberto d'Aubuisson by 54 percent to 46 percent in the presidential runoff election. Liberals are relieved that the voters decided to stick it to the dashing cowboy fascist d'Aubuisson, with his links to El Salvador's right-wing death squads. The Reagan Administration hopes that this victory by the moderate Duarte will shore up Congress's resolve to continue military aid to El Salvador. And all democrats, small "d," relish the sight of an election in any Third World country, especially an election where the outcome nourishes hope that this election won't be the last. (And this one, by the way, is a rather good illustration of the advantage of runoff elections—Jesse Jackson, please note—imagine even trying to govern El Salvador with a 35 percent plurality.)

It smacks of ingratitude, perhaps, to carp about anything that may have contributed to such an all-around pleasing result. Surely helping to defeat d'Aubuisson is God's work? Well, maybe not. Not when the little helper, operating in secret as always, is the Central Intelligence Agency. A Reagan Administration official told reporters on May 11 that the C.I.A. gave almost $1 million to Duarte's party, the Christian Democrats, and another $400,000 to a party of another moderate candidate who didn't make it into the runoff—all with the explicit purpose of defeating d'Aubuisson.

This was no special surprise. Everyone knew the United States was rooting for Duarte, and no one can accuse the C.I.A. of being laconic these days in pursuing U.S. interests, as officially perceived, in Central America. What's funding a political party compared to financing a guerrilla war? In the days before the Administration admission, Senator Jesse Helms had been making a lot of noise about U.S. interference in the Salvador election.

But Helms's charges were met with general indifference. The only place they got serious ink was *The Washington Times*, a right-wing paper published by the Moonies, and largely ignored in official Washington (except, reportedly, in the White House, where if you say, "I read it in the *Times*," they think you mean this one). The established media paid little attention, and devoted scant investigative energy to checking out whether there was anything in what Helms was saying. (There often isn't, but this time, as I say, his case was especially plausible.) *The Wall Street Journal* rightly accused journalists and liberal politicians of a double standard. Ordinarily the slightest hint of C.I.A. skulduggery is enough to incite their ire. This time no one but right-wing nuts seem to care. Put in its best light, what happens is a sort of epidemic of cognitive dissonance. It just took a while to sink in that the C.I.A. was interfering *against* a right-winger.

This small episode is intellectually gratifying for several reasons. First, it's always fun when events bear out the cynical admission that all large public policy issues—such as, should the C.I.A. covertly interfere in the affairs of other nations?—come down to the question of whose ox is gored. When the C.I.A. interferes against a right-winger, it seems, liberal C.I.A. critics don't care. In the more typical sort of C.I.A. mischief—destabilizing a revolutionary regime or shoring up a right-wing despot—the agency at least is not despoiling democracy. Yet here, where it was, the handwringers were silent. On the other hand, conservatives such as Helms and the editors of *The Wall Street Journal* have not heretofore demanded a charge against covert activities by the C.I.A. They positively support the agency's

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 4, 1984

AFTER DUARTE'S WIN

Considering El Salvador's wretched history and continuing multiple agonies, the news from that country has not been all bad lately. The most encouraging development was the election of the Christian Democratic candidate, José Napoleón Duarte, to the presidency. Also encouraging were the Salvadoran military's apparent acceptance of the election verdict and reports from San Salvador that reformist officers have organized to back Mr. Duarte's efforts to control the right-wing death squads. We have heard such reports before, of course, and El Salvador is still miles from being a functioning democracy whose civilian elected leader actually controls his own government. But the outpouring of voters showed once more how deeply the Salvadoran people desire such a democracy. And Mr. Duarte's election is surely a step in the right direction.

The news from El Salvador ought to encourage Americans to build a true bipartisan policy toward Central America, one that both allies and adversaries can rely on to last past the 1984 election. Rhetorically, at least, there is agreement on goals. Both Democrats and Republicans say that they want to build democracy, provide military aid to protect it, foster economic growth, and pursue negotiations to resolve the region's disputes to whatever extent that is possible. Operationally, however, there is little agreement and much suspicion between the parties, leading enemies to hope and friends to fear that these goals will eventually be abandoned.

President Reagan had an opportunity to broaden support for his policies when he addressed the nation on May 10. At the time of that speech, not only support but understanding was lacking. An April 29 CBS-*New York Times* poll reported that only 30 percent of the population supports Mr. Reagan's Central America policy; in the case of Nicaragua, only 19 percent knows what that policy is. Mr. Reagan could have used the opportunity to declassify some of the intelligence information people in his Administration tell reporters they have—radio intercepts, photographs, and captured documents—and thus to show doubters that, despite its denials, Nicaragua continues to ship weapons and ammunition into El Salvador. He might also have tried to demonstrate—if he could—some determination to use the influence of the United States to engage the Nicaraguans and the Salvadoran opposition in negotiations to resolve the region's woes peacefully. (That is an enormously complex task. Nearly half the Salvadoran people voted for Roberto d'Aubuisson, and if power is to be shared they will somehow have to be accommodated, too.) Finally, Mr. Reagan should have done everything possible to dispel fears that he is heading toward direct U.S. military intervention in the region.

Instead, he waved a bloody shirt. In a speech that demonstrated not the slightest acquaintance with the complexities of the region, the President used the word "Communist" no fewer than twenty-six times in thirty-five minutes, declaring in one especially overwrought passage that "if we do nothing, or if we continue to provide too little help, our choice will be a Communist Central America with additional Communist military bases on the mainland of this hemisphere and Communist subversion spreading southward and northward. This Communist subversion poses the threat that 100 million people from Panama to the open border on our south could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes."

Such a long-term threat does exist, but that is very far from being the whole story. To listen to Mr. Reagan, one would have thought that El Salvador was a garden paradise wickedly invaded by outsiders, rather than a violent, poverty-stricken country whose oligarchy has been suppressing its population for generations. "There is a small, violent right wing as opposed to democracy as are the [Communist] guerrillas," he said, "but they are not part of the government." A President who meant to convince doubters would have honestly admitted that some of the death squads are closely tied to high government police and national guard officials. He might have offered some evidence that he is aware of how much Salvadoran dedication and American tenacity it will take to produce reform.

The fact is that Mr. Reagan was trying not to convince his opposition but to confront it. He was drawing a line in

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the sand and declaring, in effect, that those not on his side are abetting a Communist takeover of all Latin America. This sort of gross distortion does a disservice to reason and civility. But scarcely less disturbing, it must be said, have been some statements by Democrats in Congress, who—whether out of partisanship, moral indignation, or alarm about the potential for regional war—have drawn America's adversaries into America's debate in ways that it is charitable to describe as inappropriate. The worst example was the so-called "Dear Comandante" letter to Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, in which ten senior House Democrats expressed opposition to U.S. aid to anti-Sandinista guerrillas. The Democrats' intention certainly was to encourage free elections in Nicaragua, but they came out telling Mr. Ortega that the virtue of such elections would be to undercut Mr. Reagan's policy.

Then, on the day after the President's speech, only 56 Democrats out of the House total of 268 could be found to vote for the President's full military aid request for El Salvador, despite a plea from Mr. Duarte to "please help the people of El Salvador and contribute simultaneously to the security and stability of our hemisphere." With nearly unanimous Republican backing, the bill passed by only four votes. The split is a little less profound than it appears in that broad area where the mainstreams of the two parties intermingle. By the time the House voted, most Democrats had acknowledged the need for military aid and most Republicans had agreed that the aid should be used to prod the Salvadorans on human rights. Obviously Mr. Duarte is going to need all the help he can get if he is to get anywhere in controlling the death squads. If the threat of a military aid cutoff can help him, then that threat should be held in reserve. But the clumsy instrument of Congressional conditionality could, ironically, end up handing veto power over aid—and the Duarte regime's survival—to the very right-wing thugs who would just as soon see Mr. Duarte destroyed anyway. It hardly makes sense to create incentives for the death squads to do their worst—to hobble Mr. Duarte by putting conditions on him that are really conditions on his enemies. The Democrats have the responsibility to press the Administration to work for reform in El Salvador, but they should not weaken Mr. Duarte in the process.

It was no Democrat, however, who revealed that Mr. Duarte's party had received covert aid from the Central Intelligence Agency. It was the leader of the Republican far right, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Mr. Helms evidently agrees with Mr. Duarte's vanquished opponent, Roberto d'Aubuisson, that El Salvador's president-elect is a crypto-Communist and that land reform is an affront to property rights. Add these to the already ample list of reasons Mr. Helms ought to be retired by the good people of North Carolina this November. And it would also be fitting for Congress to repeal the law Mr. Helms pushed through which forbids American funding for land reform in El Salvador.

We regret that the Reagan Administration chose the C.I.A. to channel its aid to Mr. Duarte, but we are glad the Administration backed him against Mr. d'Aubuisson. (The solution is for American political parties to do what West Germany's do: give aid openly and unashamedly to kindred democratic parties in the Third World. Christian Democrats in El Salvador deserve the support of American Democrats and Republicans.) And we are glad Mr. Duarte won. Now it is up to both Republicans and Democrats to do everything possible to help him succeed in defeating both right-wing and left-wing death squads and in bringing peace and justice to his country. Mr. Duarte, who has been tortured for his beliefs and has held to them, fully deserves the support of democrats and liberals in North America. It would make a mockery of the Democratic Party's professions of dedication to democracy in Central America if, having insisted on Mr. Duarte's election as the price of U.S. aid, it were to turn around and deny him that aid now that he has been elected.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY of Vermont is experimenting with what looks like an unusually patronizing form of affirmative action. The rules of the party require a candidate for President to garner at least 20 percent of the state caucus votes to qualify for delegates to the National Convention. Jesse Jackson got 14 percent, but party officials now figure what the hell, maybe they'll give him one of their seventeen delegate slots anyway. Would the party have allotted Gary Hart or Walter Mondale an unearned delegate if one of them had gotten 14 percent of the vote? Of course not. Is this *post hoc* rewrite of the rules in Vermont an augury of how the other candidates will respond to Mr. Jackson's peremptory expectations—at whatever cost to their own campaigns and against the procedures under which the voters voted? We hope not. We fear so.

□ WHAT'S ON TV? A bunch of speeches by members of the loony Republican right in the House of Representatives, that's what. These characters have taken to standing up at the end of the legislative day, after everybody else has gone home, and delivering savage oratorical attacks on their Democratic colleagues. The speeches are broadcast to the folks at home on C-SPAN, the estimable Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network. There is, or rather was, only one camera angle: a close-up on the member speaking. Now there's another angle: the camera pulls back and shows that the Chamber being addressed is, in fact, empty. The new camera angle was Speaker O'Neill's idea. Mr. O'Neill explained that too many viewers were getting the idea that these Republicans must be right to question the Democrats' patriotism, since they were doing it in speeches on the floor of the House and no one was challenging them. Now the viewers will know that no one is challenging them because no one is listening to them. This is a step toward good sense and honest dealing. Good show, Tip.

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□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "In the story of India's independence, Gandhi and Nehru played complementary parts. Gandhi awakened India's pride on the basis of her history; Nehru conjured up a picture of a strong, industrialized nation. If he held India together, he owed his success to hard work and a knowledge of history on which he drew while making fresh history. His achievements and his failings would need to be judged against the fact that no other contemporary statesman was confronted with a more complex task: the sheer size of India, its huge population, its poor economic base. His death leaves many gaps. No one man can wear his mantle. It now falls on the people of India whom he served for over four decades." (The Editors, "Pandit Nehru," June 6, 1964.)

When bankers foreclose on freedom.

DUNNING DEMOCRACY

ON APRIL 19 Salvador Jorge Blanco, the President of the Dominican Republic, announced that he was devaluing the Dominican peso by 200 percent—a move which instantly doubled the prices Dominicans pay for imported necessities such as food, cooking oil, and medicine. The urban poor, already enduring 30 percent unemployment, were infuriated by this call for more belt tightening. They rioted in cities all over the island, and Blanco dispatched his army to quell the unrest. After three days, the troops had restored order, but at a terrible cost: sixty people were killed, and two hundred wounded. One hundred opposition leaders were later arrested. Independent radio stations are still under military control. The riots not only jolted President Blanco's government, they threatened the future of Dominican democracy itself, which was restored just six years ago after decades of dictatorial right-wing rule.

Why did Blanco institute such politically destructive measures? The International Monetary Fund demanded them. If he had refused, the fund would have withheld the next installment of the $400 million loan it negotiated with Blanco last year. The Dominican Republic is desperate for cash because the price of its main export, sugar, has dropped by over 20 percent in the last five years; now its $450 million annual oil import bill uses up two-thirds of its export earnings. The country's foreign exchange reserves are so low it is unable to repay its $2.6 billion foreign debt. The I.M.F. was the only source of credit it could find.

As the "lender of last resort" to Third World nations, the I.M.F. has acquired so much influence over these countries' finances that one former member of Peru's cabinet recently called it "the ruler of the developing world." Like most unelected rulers, it abuses its powers. In country after country, I.M.F. policies have done what they did in the Dominican Republic: hinder economic growth, foment political instability, and undermine democracy. The fund does its damage with the help of American tax dollars—and at the expense of American jobs—but the only Americans who benefit are the ones who happen to run multinational banks.

The I.M.F.'s current predatory role is nothing like what the Western industrial countries intended when they set up the I.M.F. at the 1944 economic summit in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. The idea was that member nations would pay into the fund and then borrow foreign exchange from it during short-term balance-of-payments deficits. (The U.S. Treasury, and hence the U.S. taxpayer, made by far the largest contribution then, as it does today—$18.6 billion.) Everyone thought the fund's mission would remain relatively modest. But the 1973 OPEC price shock changed all that. Western banks "recycled" OPEC's huge dollar surpluses by lending billions to developing countries—on the assumption, sometimes warranted, often not, that their economies would grow enough to ensure full repayment. Then came the 1975 recession. Prices for Third World exports fell, but oil import bills stayed high. The developing countries' reserves of hard currency all but vanished. The I.M.F. stepped into the breach, supplying enormous amounts of hard currency that the developing countries needed to make debt payments to the banks. And after the second oil price shock in 1979, and the recession that followed it in 1982, debtor countries became even more dependent on the I.M.F. Today some forty countries owe the fund a total of $32 billion.

BUT I.M.F. loans come with strings attached. The fund only lends to nations that agree to economic "adjustment" measures designed to rebuild their reserves of foreign exchange—and hence their capacity to pay off foreign debt. The I.M.F. requires governments to restrict imports and boost exports, usually by devaluing their currencies, cutting wages, and increasing taxes. These austerity steps halt economic growth and impose severe economic pain on the people of the debtor countries. (And they can mean starvation for the poorest of the poor, since many Third World countries import most of their food.) Yet usually debtor countries have no choice but to give in to the I.M.F. The banks regard acceptance of I.M.F. strictures as evidence of a country's creditworthiness—and won't supply credit to countries that reject them.

Of course, imposing austerity on countries that already have large populations of poor people is a recipe for political unrest. When the protests begin, governments often have just two choices: political suicide, or repression. The I.M.F. thus encourages the worst tendencies of authoritarian rulers. In Brazil, for example, which is now in its second year of I.M.F. austerity, wage cuts and price hikes have sparked strikes and bread riots. The military government has responded by declaring martial law in some cities, and by postponing a long-promised return to free

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elections. And the fund makes life all but impossible for democrats. Salvador Jorge Blanco only preserved his government in the Dominican Republic by taking uncharacteristically repressive measures. The Nigerian military had many reasons for overthrowing the democratic government of President Shehu Shagari last January; the last straw was his austerity budget designed, in part, to appease the I.M.F. President Fernando Belaunde Terry of Peru is currently being pressured by the I.M.F. to raise taxes and food prices—at a time when Peruvian democracy already faces a double political threat from a major recession and Maoist "Shining Path" guerrillas.

THE BIGGEST beneficiaries of the I.M.F.'s policies are the multinational banks, whose reckless lending helped create the debt crisis in the first place. The I.M.F. shields them from the consequences of their own shortsightedness, making sure that debt payments continue to be made, and that the banks can therefore keep showing profits on their quarterly balance sheets. Take the Dominican case. The currency devaluation will reduce the country's imports and cheapen its exports. Dollars that Dominicans used to pay to U.S. food producers will remain in the country; more dollars will flow in to pay for Dominican products. But the money won't stay on the island; it will go straight to the banks that hold the Dominican Republic's $2.6 billion foreign debt. The $400 million loan from the I.M.F.—which came courtesy of American taxpayers—will end up on Wall Street, too. The Dominican Central Bank will use it to pay interest.

So, just as the I.M.F. redistributes money from the Third World to the United States, it also helps American financiers at the expense of American manufacturers and workers. Forcing debtor countries to cut imports and send every dollar they can scrape up to the bankers wrecks America's overseas markets. According to a story by Everett G. Martin in the May 8 *Wall Street Journal*, austerity measures cut the imports of Latin American countries by $30 billion between 1981 and 1983. This reduced the Latin American sales of U.S. companies by $16.3 billion. Martin estimated that this caused a net loss of more than 400,000 American jobs.

Bad as the I.M.F. is, there are two things that would probably be worse. Self-styled populists ranging from Ralph Nader to Richard Viguerie have proposed that America pull out of the fund altogether, which would probably kill it. This would punish the banks. The problem is that, for better or worse, the banks' fate is now entwined with ours. The debtor countries need an internationally funded source of credit with which to pay off their loans. Without it, they could default, and maybe bring on a collapse of the world financial system. The resulting economic suffering and political instability would be worse than anything the I.M.F. imposes now. Still, taxpayers shouldn't be asked to shoulder the banks' burdens completely. That is essentially what the other main idea for dealing with the I.M.F.'s failings would do. Felix Rohatyn, the bailout whiz from Lazard Frères, has proposed a new multilateral organization to buy up the banks' Third World debt (at only a small discount) in exchange for long-term bonds guaranteed by the organization's member governments. This scheme gets taxpayers coming and going: they have to pay the enormous price to buy up the debt, and then be prepared to lose their shirts if a debtor country defaults.

The I.M.F. doesn't need to be scrapped or replaced, just reformed. It should help banks do for debtor countries what banks already do for corporate customers who have trouble paying their debt: set up "work-out" arrangements which extend repayment schedules and provide new credit at reduced interest rates. Congress endorsed the work-out approach last November, in an amendment to the Reagan Administration's bill increasing the American contribution to the I.M.F. by $8.4 billion. The amendment, drafted by Democratic Representative Charles Schumer, requires the U.S. members of the I.M.F. board—who have an effective veto over I.M.F. policy decisions—to vote down adjustment programs where the banks involved refuse to offer the debtor country new long-term loans at low interest. The law applies to every country whose annual foreign debt payments are more than 85 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. Developing countries would still have to pay their debts. But by reducing interest payments, work-outs reduce the need for I.M.F.-imposed austerity. This would leave debtor countries with more money to rebuild their economies and buy American goods. Best of all, it would break the dangerous cycle of unrest and repression which chokes off the development of democratic governments.

The banks, of course, have resisted the work-out idea, because it would make them take what bankers call an "earnings hit" in the short run—that is, it would reduce quarterly profits. But that's only fair, considering how much the banks did to create the debt crisis. In any case, work-outs would help the banks in the long run. Much of the interest money the banks are getting now from debtor countries comes from short-term, high-interest loans which the banks themselves provided. The banks count on the I.M.F. to enforce austerity and squeeze out the dollars needed to pay this mounting high-interest debt. But one day a large, relatively self-sufficient debtor like Brazil or Argentina may decide that it's had enough austerity and repudiate the I.M.F., leaving the banks with far more bad debt to write off than they would ever have under a work-out.

The banks' reliance on the I.M.F. has so far enjoyed the support of both Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, who have called austerity enforced by the fund a proper response to the debtor countries' economic mistakes. But the recent jump in the prime interest rate, which drastically increased the debt burden of countries like Argentina and Mexico, seems to have forced Volcker and Regan to face the fact that a work-out, "earnings hit" and all, may now be unavoidable. On May 12, Volcker spoke cautiously but favorably about a "cap" on the interest rates banks can charge for new credit to debtor countries. The next day, the Treas-

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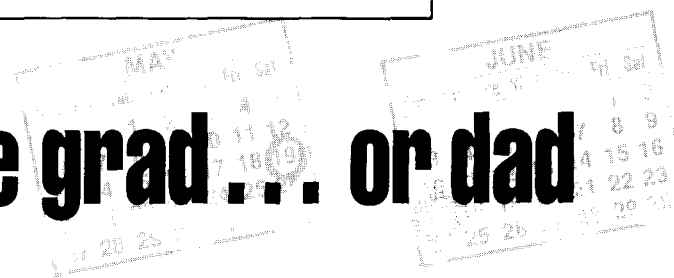

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ury Department's international debt troubleshooter, David C. Muldoon, did the same. And according to a May 14 *New York Times* story by Peter T. Kilborn, even some banks, including Morgan Guaranty and the Bank of America, now realize that the game is up.

But the emerging consensus for work-outs is still fragile, and it is hardly founded on any bankerly love of democracy. Its first test will probably come in Argentina, which has a foreign debt of over $45 billion. Argentina's next debt payments fall due on June 30, and the democratic government of Raúl Alfonsín is negotiating for an I.M.F. loan. Some banks may try to postpone Argentina's principal payments—a clever bookkeeping maneuver that would artificially lower Argentina's debt service below 85 percent of its foreign exchange earnings, and keep the Schumer Amendment from coming into effect. Then the banks could once again offer short-term credit to Argentina at high interest rates—backed up by I.M.F. austerity demands to ensure repayment. If Secretary Regan is serious about the work-out approach, he will block any such subterfuge by declaring the Administration's intention to enforce the Schumer Amendment. Otherwise, Alfonsín may well be forced into the sort of dilemma that no democratic friend of the United States should ever have to face. He could repudiate the I.M.F. altogether, which might trigger an international financial crisis. Or he could ask Argentines to endure drastic cuts in their standard of living—which might turn Buenos Aires into another Santo Domingo.

CHUCK LANE

Some tough questions for E.T.S.

TESTING, TESTING

IN NOVEMBER 1983, the governor of Arkansas signed a bill requiring public school teachers to pass competency tests in order to keep their jobs. As you might expect, the new law was harshly criticized by teachers. As you might not expect, it was also criticized by the Educational Testing Service, the nation's largest testing company and the manufacturer of the examination Arkansas originally wanted its teachers to take.

"It is morally and educationally wrong," said Gregory R. Anrig, president of E.T.S., "to tell someone who has been judged a satisfactory teacher for many years that passing a certain test on a certain day is necessary to keep his or her job." Anrig said his company would no longer sell its National Teacher Examinations to states or school boards that use the tests to determine the futures of practicing teachers.

Education writers generally applauded Anrig's announcement as an unexpected gesture from a tax-exempt $130 million company that has never been eager to acknowledge the limitations of its products (which include not only the N.T.E. but also the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Graduate Record Examinations, the Graduate Management Admission Test, parts of the Law School Admission Test, and dozens of occupational certification and licensing exams). But the N.T.E. controversy is more complicated than it may seem. The new E.T.S. position arises more from self-interest than from concern about test use, and it raises hard questions that E.T.S. has consistently found it lucrative to ignore.

At least sixteen states now require that prospective teachers pass competency tests before receiving teaching certificates. Most use the N.T.E. "You're eventually going to have to pass it," a spokesperson for the Louisiana Board of Education told me, "if you want to get a regular teacher certificate."

This, apparently, is a use of the N.T.E. that E.T.S. approves of. Indeed, the company's confidential "Corporate Plan" for fiscal 1984 calls for the addition of "two new states as users of the N.T.E. program for certification." But if using the N.T.E. and its offspring to test *practicing* teachers is "morally and educationally wrong," as the president of E.T.S. has asserted, why is it right to use the same tests to determine which *aspiring* teachers will be allowed to enter the profession? If the N.T.E. doesn't test knowledge that teachers need, why should people have to pass it in order to earn teaching certificates? And if it tests knowledge that teachers do need, what's wrong with requiring teachers to take it?

The true source of Anrig's concern about the N.T.E. is surely not fairness, but the flood of lawsuits that would inundate his company if veteran teachers began losing their jobs (or their raises or their promotions) as a result of their performance on an E.T.S. multiple-choice examination. Prior to Anrig's announcement, the Arkansas Education Association had said that it would go to court to challenge the state's new testing law. E.T.S. doesn't run into this problem with most of its other tests, because most other test-takers—unlike practicing teachers—aren't represented by powerful unions. Nor are most test-takers in a position to prove E.T.S. wrong, by demonstrating that they are actually capable of doing what E.T.S. says they are not.

Anrig told *The New York Times* last November that using the N.T.E. "as a sole criticism for determining employment or pay scales violates all kinds of federal laws about the relevance of tests to the work place." But if the N.T.E. bears no relevance to the work place—in this case, the classroom—then it ought to be abolished, not confined to people who lack the means to defend themselves.

HOW RELEVANT is the N.T.E.? The only way to find out is to look at the test. Curiously enough, much of the N.T.E.—a test intended to separate the able from the inept—is barely literate. Choosing the desired answer to a sample item from the test for kindergarten teachers requires test-takers to form this sentence: "[T]he skill that is

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prerequisite to the successful completion of this experiment is the ability to be able to make accurate observations."

Frequently the N.T.E. is simply wrong, as in this item from the test in "speech communication":

> Which of the following is the most effective way for a newspaper to protect itself against libel suits?
> (A) Avoiding the use of the names of celebrities
> (B) Giving the source of questionable information
> (C) Avoiding ambiguous headlines
> (D) Printing an immediate retraction if challenged
> (E) Obtaining the consent of persons being quoted

I once worked as a researcher for a magazine that was sued for libel with some regularity. In no case did "obtaining the consent of persons being quoted"—E.T.S.'s "correct" answer—provide any protection whatsoever, because people typically do not sue publications over things that they themselves have said; they go to court over things the publications have said about *them*. It probably doesn't matter whether "speech communication" teachers know even the first thing about avoiding libel suits. But they shouldn't be denied jobs just because they know more than E.T.S.

THE National Teachers Examinations are written by E.T.S. employees with the help of "professional educators from all sections of the country," according to the 1983-84 *Bulletin of Information* for N.T.E. programs. More interesting than how the tests are written, though, is how they are "validated." Validity, in testing, is a technical term that refers to the relationship between a test and the purpose to which it is put. E.T.S. measures the validity of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, for example, by comparing students' scores on the test with their first-year college grades. If the correlation between the two seems high enough, E.T.S. judges the test to be valid.

Validating the N.T.E. is much more difficult, since no one knows how to measure good teaching. The N.T.E. would be valid, E.T.S. decided, if the material covered on the test bore a sufficient resemblance to the material taught in teacher education programs.

The N.T.E. test that Delaware uses is called the Pre-Professional Skills Test (P.P.S.T.). To determine whether the questions in it were valid for certifying teachers in Delaware, E.T.S. submitted a copy of the P.P.S.T. to a professor from a teacher training school, a public school administrator, and twenty-two elementary, junior high, and high school teachers, and asked them what they thought.

Although only one member of the panel actually worked in a teacher training program, "panel members overwhelmingly reported that candidates would have had the opportunity to learn the skills tested," according to the final report, which was written by E.T.S.'s Gary Echternacht. Furthermore, although "most panel members believed that fewer than 13 percent . . . of the items on any one test were questionable," "These results strongly support the validity of the test." They also strongly supported the elimination of at least 13 percent of the test items, but this was not done.

Setting the passing score was also easy. Panel members were instructed to arrange individual items from the test into "homogenous groups" and then estimate what percentage of the items in each group a "minimally qualified candidate" might be expected to answer correctly. These percentages were multiplied by the number of questions in each group, and the resulting figures were added up to provide a minimum passing score for the test. Of course, panel members could have achieved the same result in less time by simply counting the number of items on the test that they felt were important. But E.T.S. prides itself on its scientific approach to testing. In his report, Echternacht refers to the percentage-and-multiplication procedure as "Ebel's method."

The estimates that panel members arrived at through Ebel's method varied widely. On the forty-item math test, for example, the panel's suggested passing scores ranged from fifteen to thirty-eight—from fewer than a third to all but two of the questions. To arrive at a single score, E.T.S. averaged all the estimates. This means that one-half of the expert panel must believe that Delaware is certifying unqualified teachers, while the other half must believe that it is rejecting qualified ones.

Finding qualified teachers isn't the only, or even the most important, purpose of the tests. E.T.S. recommended to Delaware that it review its passing score every year "to take into account the supply and demand of teachers." In other words, according to E.T.S., the test should be used not to identify a pool of qualified teachers but to control the competition for available jobs.

Frank B. Murray, dean of the University of Delaware's College of Education, had a different concern. In a letter to William B. Keene, superintendent of the state department of public instruction, Murray said, "I am concerned that the procedure we are following to set a cutoff score is not wise. Apart from the fact that the expert panel procedure (Ebel's method) is *only* recommended when you cannot get data from a sample of test-takers, I am worried that the whole point of the competency testing of teachers will be defeated because expert panels, where they have been used, have uniformly set the score too high. To have to lower the cutoff score at some later time would be a public relations disaster. (There are also real questions about whether the panel even understood the Ebel procedure. . . .)"

Despite the threat to its public relations, Delaware now uses the P.P.S.T. as a requirement for teacher certification, and E.T.S. is working hard to ensure that other states will join it.

MOST PEOPLE don't distinguish between the question, "Should teachers be competent?" and the question, "Should teachers be required to pass competency tests?" But in fact the two are entirely different. No reasonable person would advocate the hiring of incompetent teachers. But a reasonable person might very well

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advocate the abolition of teacher competency tests, or at least of the N.T.E. There are several reasons.

First, the N.T.E. adds yet another layer to the educational bureaucracy that makes it difficult to reward good teachers and nearly impossible to remove bad ones. If you think it's hard to get rid of a bad teacher now, just try firing one whose "competence" has been certified by E.T.S.

Second, minimum competency tests have a way of becoming maximum competency tests. School districts that have imposed competency tests as requirements for high school graduation have often discovered that the tests tend to establish ceilings rather than floors for student achievement.

Third, far from facilitating educational reform, the existence of an N.T.E. requirement makes it nearly impossible to improve teacher training programs, which in turn make it nearly impossible to change the N.T.E. Since E.T.S. bases the content of the N.T.E. on its understanding of what is taught in teachers' colleges—and since teachers' colleges not only admit students on the basis of N.T.E. scores but also dedicate themselves to helping those same students prepare for N.T.E. certifying tests—the tests and the school programs are mutually reinforcing.

Is there an alternative to the N.T.E.? The question assumes that the tests now perform some necessary function. This is not the case. The easiest way to improve on the N.T.E would be to get rid of it. Use of the test is a simpleminded response to a very complicated problem. State legislators find the N.T.E. irresistibly appealing because it already exists and because requiring them costs taxpayers little. Nobody gains from the proliferation of shoddy competency tests except the companies that sell them.

DAVID OWEN

David Owen is a 1984 Fellow of the Alicia Patterson Foundation. He is currently at work on a book about E.T.S.

Only one man can beat Reagan.

WHY I AM FOR GARY HART

MICHAEL McDOWELL, a gifted and articulate novelist who lives near Boston, was approached by an exit pollster after casting his ballot in the Massachusetts Presidential primary. When asked why he had voted for Gary Hart, he said: "I would vote for a dead dog in the street if I thought he could beat Ronald Reagan in November. Fortunately, it hasn't come down to that yet, and so I was happy to vote for Senator Hart."

Some months earlier, when my wife and I sat down to try and decide which of the eight Democratic candidates to support, our own overriding concern was similar: we wanted a candidate who could beat the incumbent President and bring an end to the present Administration's shortsighted and cruel domestic policies, its dangerous foreign policy, and the "Yeah, buddy, you just come on and try it!" mentality that has dominated its defense policy.

AT THAT TIME the Democratic field consisted of two well-known political figures, Mondale and Glenn, and six dark horses. I think we realized at the same moment that we had voted for one of those dark horses in his first canvass for national office back in 1974—and that he had been a dark horse then as well. That man was Gary Hart, and he was running for one of Colorado's two Senate seats.

We were transplanted easterners who had gone to Colorado so I could write a novel called *The Shining*, and we were surprised to find that the image we had of Colorado, as a trendy state where everyone owned a ski lodge and got Rocky Mountain High after a day of skiing or jogging, was almost completely fallacious. There are a couple of trendy spots like Vail and Aspen, true enough, but if Pennsylvania is the state where the Bible Belt really begins, then Colorado is the state where it ends.

The attitude toward Hart at the time was one of mingled admiration and dismissal—he was a good fellow, everyone agreed, and forthright on the issues, and certainly energetic, but it was obvious that he could not win in the Bible Belt (and if you think Colorado isn't a part of the Belt, you need only tune your AM radio to the Arvada radio station, which alternates fire-and-brimstone preachers with git-down gospel singing).

But he did win in 1974, and quite handily. He won again in 1980, not so handily, but in the face of the Reagan ground swell and a massive conservative backlash that was, in large part, a frustrated response of American voters to the Iranian hostage crisis.

My wife and I, who believed that only someone with Hart's octane could beat Ronald Reagan in 1984, contacted the Maine Hart organization (and there *was* one, mostly because the Maine caucuses are held only a week or so after the New Hampshire primary) and asked if we could have a coffee or something to discuss Hart with local voters prior to the caucuses. As a result, I ended up introducing and endorsing Gary Hart at a Bangor news conference.

About five reporters turned up at this less than auspicious occasion. Following it, the candidate, who had flown into Bangor International Airport in a plane only slightly larger than your average box kite, saw my wife and me out to our car.

I asked him the question that was most on my mind—if the well-nigh impossible should happen and he should get the nomination, did he believe he could beat Ronald Reagan in November? It is a question to which, of course,

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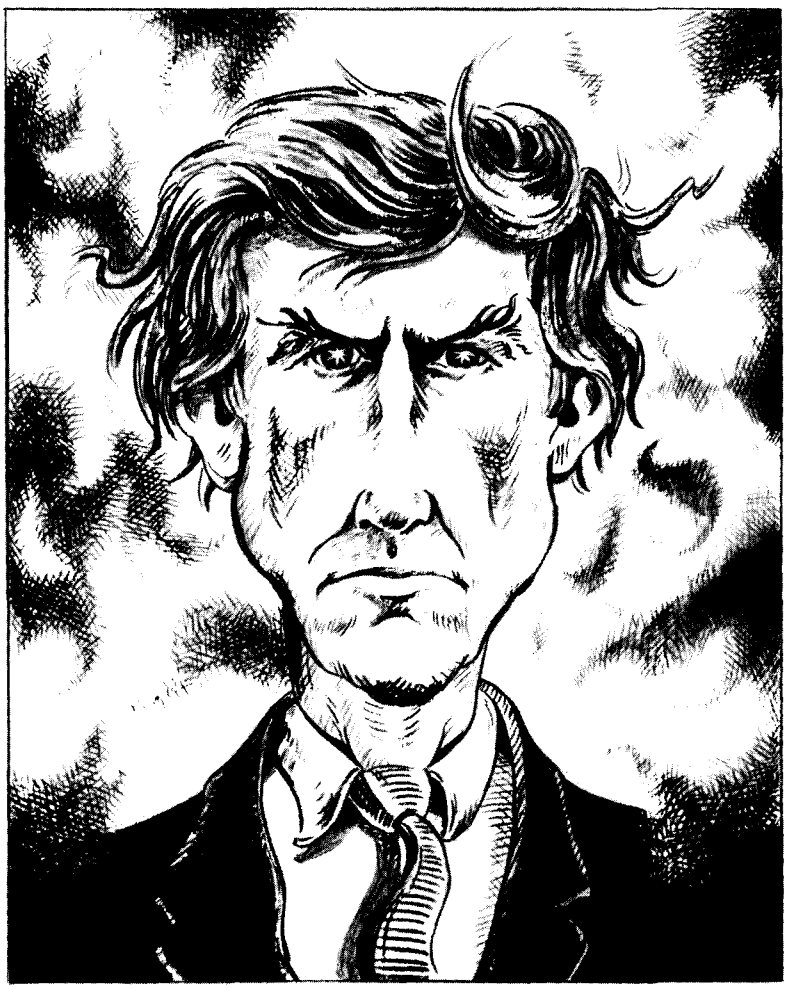
no candidate would reply in the negative. But I wanted to watch his face while he answered it. I did—closely.

He smiled. It was not a foolish smile, or a let's-go-get-'em-troops smile. Nor was it an evangelist's smile, which would have been the most disturbing of all. It was a smile, I believed then and believe now, that might well have convinced Ronald Reagan to whip out his checkbook and contribute $500 or so to the Mondale-for-President campaign effort, had he seen it.

"Oh, yes," he said. "If I get it, I'll beat him."

Did I say I believed him? It was impossible *not* to believe him. I can remember feeling a sense of great excitement coupled with a surprising sense of fear, because I suddenly felt I might be close to something that *might actually make a difference*. You could feel the man's engine running, not a little lawn mower engine as the press at that time seemed to believe, but something like a great big old door-sucker Pontiac with a 442 under the hood. And the door was open. For me.



DRAWING BY JOHN YANSON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Well, I got in, and I haven't been sorry. I spent as much time as possible with Hart in New Hampshire, speaking for him where I could, listening to him, watching him, assessing. I was no longer trying to figure out if he could beat Reagan, because I was convinced he could. I was trying to decide if I was working for a good man or a bad one, a real man or a poseur, a strong man or a weak one, a man who actually had new ideas or one who was simply giving the equivalent of TV commercials for fast-fast-fast relief from the podium.

In the period between then and now I have been utterly convinced that Gary Hart should be President. The clincher, for me, was observing in him a trait he shares not with John Kennedy but with Abraham Lincoln: the guy doesn't really *like* to campaign. He finds the process not exactly unpleasant but certainly stressful. He is a man whose interior self is kept carefully away from the outward process of the campaign. He will not give you the illusion that you know that inner self. He will pat or stroke babies put before him, but will not kiss them. If you want to shake his hand he'll shake it, but he'll not offer you his first, feeling it to be an imposition.

We have seen Presidents—Nixon, for one, although Jimmy Carter is probably a better example—to whom the game has seemed more important than the candle; to whom the Presidency has seemed like a kind of four-year-long postgame show. Gary Hart merits serious consideration simply because he is not interested in *winning* the Presidency; he is interested in *being* President.

He has been repeatedly accused of vagueness by his principal rival, Mr. Mondale, except when it serves the former Vice President to cite the specifics of Hart's record. The charge has gained a certain amount of credence as a result of repetition in the electronic media. It's ironic that this should be so, since Hart has been repeatedly singled out as the most telegenic of the candidates, and since the programs he has proposed are by far the most specific and clearly worked out. But each network telecasts less news time in the course of an entire day than the length of a single TV movie (and that includes the five-minute spots at the head and foot of each half hour on morning programs such as "Today" and "Good Morning, America"), and complex breakdowns of policy within such limits are impossible.

The result of such coverage is bemusing—it is akin to the capsule nutrition that space travelers are always swallowing in pulp science fiction stories: call them newspills. This is not really the fault of the news broadcasters themselves. I don't believe, in spite of Roger Mudd's unfortunate Super Tuesday interview with Hart, that there has ever been any real anti-Hart bias in the campaign. It is, rather, the logical result of a system that reduces a candidate to a series of nightly newspills: CANDIDATE VOTED AGAINST CHRYSLER BAILOUT. HARTPENCE. TAX ON IMPORTED OIL. QUESTION OF AGE. WHERE'S THE BEEF? And so on. It is a regrettable campaign side effect that all the candidates, not just Gary Hart, have had to cope with,

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much as a pretty woman on her way back from her lunch hour has to cope with wolf whistles.

I think that in the pressure-point primaries—New York and Pennsylvania—Hart was badly hurt by his failure to support the Chrysler bailout. Those Democratic voters who feel unhappy or uncomfortable with the fact of Hart's negative vote need to make an effort to cast their minds back to the time when the looming Chrysler bankruptcy was an issue, and remember that a very large segment of the public saw the bailout not as a panacea for auto workers but rather as a life-ring for inept Chrysler management. The larger, looming question on this subject in what remains of the campaign for the nomination is whether voters and delegates will recognize the difference between the willingness to say yes and the ability to say no. Nothing succeeds like success; Lee Iacocca is a fact, and so is the Chrysler rebound, and Mondale has traded on these facts quite successfully.

A little less obvious but more troubling is the fact that the "bailout syndrome" which prevailed in the case of Chrysler has been prevalent in America's military establishment, which for decades has thrived in spite of chronic cost overruns and bad business practices. In Hart's unwillingness to support the Chrysler bailout, the military spenders must see an ominous sign. A corollary question that voters must consider is whether or not a candidate such as Mondale, who has depended so heavily on organized labor in his drive for the nomination, will be able to deal fairly and impartially on behalf of *all* the American people when similar questions come up without benefit of an Iacocca *ex machina*.

IN THE END, it seems to me that one fact rises clearly above all others. The central question of this campaign is whether the Democrats will nominate a candidate or elect a President; whether they intend to unseat Ronald Reagan or merely to confirm the existing Democratic machine and hope that there *will* be a 1988. I have satisfied myself that Gary Hart will make a good President, and that he shows some of the attributes of greatness; certainly he is young enough, energetic enough, and enough unencumbered by special interests to pursue peace and promote prosperity. That allows me to return to the reason I've allowed myself to become involved in this crazy, compelling process at all. It is, simply put, that Ronald Reagan is a bad President and must be turned out of office. Regarded within the boundaries of the country of which both he and I are citizens, he is a Scrooge who is absurdly out of touch with the needs of his constituency; regarded as a statesman of global influence, he is like a man who is standing hip-deep in gasoline and lighting matches to see just where the hell he is—and threatening to toss those matches if anyone speaks to him in a voice above a whisper. If it was just the man himself, that would be one thing. But I'm standing in the room with him, and I am afraid. And my kids are standing in that room, too.

If Walter Mondale is nominated in San Francisco—the city in which Barry Goldwater was nominated—I will carefully place a MONDALE FOR PRESIDENT bumper sticker over the Hart sticker on my car the very next day, and I will work like hell for him.

Because, if you can dig it, I agree with Michael McDowell completely.

Even a dead dog in the street, man.

Even that.

STEPHEN KING

Stephen King's most recent novel is *Pet Sematary* (Doubleday).

Win or lose, the best nominee.

WHY I AM FOR WALTER MONDALE

TIME COMES in the life of a political party when its job is to lose the current Presidential election gracefully, keep control of the apparatus, do as little damage as possible to the Senators, Congressmen, and governors who are also running, and gird like hell for the next Presidential election four years down the line.

Each of our major parties has faced this problem over the past generation. In 1964, when the Republicans had little chance of unseating the popular and effective Lyndon Johnson, they should have run some conciliatory candidate—someone like William Scranton, who would not have made waves but who would have garnered all the votes accessible to his party. He would not have hurt his fellow Republicans, and his party would not have suffered. Instead, Barry Goldwater, an immensely likable man, was nominated. Swing voters were terrified by his bellicosity, and not only did the party lose the Presidency but it also sacrificed many good junior positions even down to the state legislative level. The party had ignored the commandment: "In a losing position, lose gracefully."

Same thing happened to the Democrats in 1972, when there was little chance of unseating Richard Nixon. Had a sacrificial lamb like Edmund Muskie been nominated, little damage would have been done. Instead the Democrats played a wild card, George McGovern, and engineered a disaster which cost them many lesser seats across the country.

Signs indicate that the Presidential election of 1984 may fall into this category. If Ronald Reagan's incredible luck holds; if the electorate continues to perceive him as being of gentle heart and determined will; if the malfeasances of his Administration refuse to rub off on him; and if his adventure in Grenada is still judged to have been a heroic act in defense of the Republic while the debacle in Beirut is

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forgiven, he could well enjoy a victory greater than the one he gained over Jimmy Carter, regardless of his Democratic opponent.

If that is predestined, the Democrats should nominate the man best calculated to hold the party together, gather strength, and plan for an all-out try in the crucial election of 1988. That one they would have to win, for should Mr. Reagan win this year and prove able to engineer the election of his successor in 1988, prospects for the Democrats during the remainder of this century would be bleak.

If the 1984 election proceeds as now seems possible, the Democrats would be wisest to nominate someone who can mount a respectable campaign, help other candidates, and stay in position to win if unexpected developments occur. Which candidate can best accomplish these three important goals?

DRAWING BY JOHN YANSON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Rev. Jesse Jackson is unquestionably the charismatic figure of this election. Legions of people have said to me, after listening to the debates: "He's the only one talking sense, the only one openly addressing the issues." It is a reflection on the electoral process in the American democracy that Jackson has been free to talk sense because he has not been seriously running for the Presidency. Real candidates must be more circumspect. He has been striving to establish a turf from which he could operate in the future, and he has succeeded beyond even his own hopes. His performance has been brilliant.

But it has also been fearfully divisive. Jackson is a Janus candidate. With one face he confronts the future: American politics will not be the same when he is through, and he is unquestionably paving the way for some serious black candidate who will emerge before this century is out. But with his other face he looks to a racist past, and his unfortunate statements, his thoughtless insults to the person and the intelligence of the general voter, have alienated about twice as many voters as his charisma has attracted. His verbal excesses terrify, and his threatening behavior repels.

He has not the remotest chance of binding either his party or the general electorate together, but he has accumulated great power which must be taken into account. He has been a useful gadfly, and if some way can be found to hold him and his power within the Democratic structure he will ultimately prove to be a most constructive force. How this can be done I cannot guess.

Gary Hart is the Wendell Willkie of this campaign. Charming, dedicated, clever, a clear voice of the future, he has been a fresh breeze blowing in from the West, and the excitement he has caused is proof of his appeal to a jaded electorate. If his popularity and maturity grow during the next four years, he could well be the inevitable choice of the Democrats in 1988.

Looking only at the third obligation of the party this year—actually to win, should there be some unforeseen upheaval—Hart would likely be a better bet than Mondale. Because of his age and his liberalism, he would present a more viable alternative to Reagan, and he well might inspire those undecided voters on whom the outcome would depend.

But in all other aspects of the race, Hart would serve less ably than Mondale. If he were to be nominated this year, he would probably prove to be another Goldwater—or, to choose a closer analogy, another McGovern. He would engender such strong resistance among traditional Democratic groups that he would probably cause lesser Democrats to lose their seats. (During the critical days when the large industrial states were voting, I chanced to serve on a commission with Lane Kirkland and had an opportunity to observe with what force he dug in his heels to preserve labor's position within the Democratic Party. He seemed determined to see Mondale nominated, as planned, and he brought all the pressure he could command to achieve this.) And because Hart would have upset the professionals' favorite in gaining the nomination, he—and they—would certainly throw the Democratic organization into confusion.

I have observed in American politics, and in several campaigns in which I was a candidate, that the old pros who run a party, Republican or Democratic, will often prefer to sit on their hands and lose an election rather than to lose long-range control of their party. This may sound suicidal to the outsider, but to the insider it is highly practical. If Hart were to be the nominee this year, he would throw the party into a disarray as great as that

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which followed the McGovern nomination in 1972—and the results could be as disastrous.

Also, Hart must consider his strategic position. If he were to lose heavily in 1984, he could not possibly gain the nomination again in 1988. The inability of William Jennings Bryan, Thomas E. Dewey, and Adlai Stevenson to win the second time around has made repeat nominations of losers unattractive. Promising newcomers like Tim Wirth of Colorado or Mario Cuomo of New York would elbow him out of the way. If, however, he continues to put up a good fight in the primaries this year, he could place himself in a very strong position in 1988.

FOR ALL these sound, practical reasons Walter Mondale must be the choice of the professional Democrat this year. Had the prairie fire which Hart ignited in New Hampshire been whipped by the high winds of expectation and delight across New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois in a William Jennings Bryan conflagration—and remember that Hart and Bryan came from neighboring states—the professionals would have been swept away, and Hart might possibly have gone on to victory in November. But despite his surprising revitalization in Ohio and Indiana, he has not yet proved that he can enlist the support of his party's professionals.

The nomination of Mondale would be a sensible, inevitable move, not so dramatic as a cyclonic burst by Hart, but more stable in the long run and more protective of the party.

Mondale is not a drab candidate. With long years in government in high positions, he is obviously better qualified for the Presidency than Jimmy Carter was at this time in the campaign of 1976 or Ronald Reagan in 1980. He carried an unflawed reputation into the battle, is of the proper age for the high command, and is possessed of demonstrated common sense. He has shown himself to be a sturdy campaigner, and he has a decent respect for the office he seeks. One of his main advantages, when compared with either Carter or Reagan, is that he would not be running against Washington and the federal government, but with it.

I see the weakness of my basic argument. In 1964 the Republicans suffered a debacle; in 1968 they stormed back and won the Presidency. In 1972 the Democrats suffered a total disaster; in 1976 they won the White House. It could be argued that what the Democrats ought to do is nominate Hart as the force of the future, attract as many independents as possible, go down to a horrendous defeat, and pave the way for a recovery in 1988. Victory sometimes grows from the ashes of humiliation.

This would be unlikely in the present configuration because Hart would have far less chance than Mondale of holding blacks within a coalition. But arduous work as the likely candidate in 1988 might enable him to win their support.

I am driven to believe that Mondale should be nominated. He can hold the party together. He is a fine man who has worked hard to make himself eligible for this high office and is obviously better prepared for it than either Hart or Jackson.

Does my reasoning imply that I believe a Republican victory in November is inevitable? Certainly not! I can foresee seven possible eventualities, any one of which could produce a Democratic victory. (1.) Reagan's advanced age might suddenly introduce an unanticipated factor. (2.) Lebanon or Central America might really fall apart and cause voters to wonder if "standing tall" is an adequate foreign policy. (3.) The collapse of foreign borrowers might imperil the stability of our large banking institutions. (4.) Even without foreign impetus, more of our internal banks might collapse, revealing the shaky structure beneath. (5.) The voters might receive a shock if interest rates climb sharply. (6.) Even Mr. Reagan's potential supporters might awaken to the fact that if reelected Mr. Reagan would probably appoint five more Justices to the Supreme Court, leaving only one, Byron White, who had been appointed by a Democratic President; would a balance of 8-1 Republicans be good for the Republic? (7.) And women, blacks, and Hispanics might flock to the Democratic Party in great numbers and actually vote.

The Democratic nomination is eminently worth having, and the fight to gain it has been an honorable one which has served our nation well. It is entirely possible that the brawling which has given the Republicans and the cartoonists such delight has served principally to animate the party.

My reluctance to concede victory has been influenced by the Texas gubernatorial of 1983. Incumbent Bill Clements, the first Republican to occupy the chair for one hundred and five years, had everything going for him in his bid for reelection. His party felt he'd been a good governor. He was the rough-and-ready type that Texans like. He had an incredible war chest of $13 million and the support of practically everyone in the establishment. He ran a good campaign against a little-known Democrat, Mark White, and in the days prior to the vote I met not a single person who thought that Clements could fail. There was no way he could lose. But the polls had scarcely closed before it became apparent that White was winning in a stupendous upset, 1,698,000 to 1,466,000.

Clements, through a series of explicable but not appreciated accidents, had lost the women, the blacks, and the Hispanics. Ronald Reagan could do the same. And then Walter F. Mondale, having been nominated to lead his party through the storm of a foredoomed national election, would get the chance to be the fine President he can be.

JAMES A. MICHENER

James A. Michener, whose most recent book is *Poland* (Random House), has been active in the Democratic Party for many years as (among other things) a Congressional candidate, a Presidential elector, and a member of numerous national party commissions. He is at work on a book about Texas.

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Can the national idea survive the multinational reality?

THE SORRY STATE OF INDIA

BY JAMES TRAUB

INDIA IS falling apart. But then, India is always falling apart. As the current wave of violence has mounted—this time it's the Sikhs, in the state of Punjab—one is reminded of the early 1950s, when one language group after another insisted that state boundaries be redrawn along linguistic lines. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru saw this demand as a threat to the newborn sovereignty of the nation, and at first he vacillated and argued. Then in 1953 a prominent leader of the movement fasted to death, and Nehru quickly realized that the situation was potentially far more dangerous than he had thought. He impaneled a States Reorganization Commission while he campaigned against national division. By 1956 the country had been more or less peacefully, and more or ress rationally, re-divided.

As the body count in the Punjab agitation reached ten or fifteen a week—over three hundred deaths in two years—and as violence stalled and started again in Kashmir and Assam, Nehru's seemingly modest triumphs began to look both heroic and wise. His daughter, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, has been powerless to stop the violence in Punjab, which began with negotiable and relatively modest demands involving increased state autonomy and the recognition of symbolic religious rights and escalated into a sort of mini-Lebanese anarchy. Sikh terrorists have been randomly assassinating Hindus, as well as police officials and political leaders, while Hindus have struck back with a campaign of slaughter against Sikhs. Negotiation now seems futile. The Prime Minister even agreed to rewrite the constitution to give the Sikhs separate religious status. But the violence rolled on.

Unable or unwilling to compromise and mediate as her father did, Mrs. Gandhi, despite her reknown as a fearless and even ruthless leader, has been strangely incapacitated by the situation in Punjab. "Mrs. Gandhi is powerless," says Jaswant Singh, a parliamentary leader of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party). "People who say she's all-powerful understand nothing."

Mrs. Gandhi, to be fair, has a hotter bed of coals to tread than did her father. In Nehru's day, Indian nationhood was new and precious, and the country's bickering groups often submerged their interests, at his bidding, for the common good. By now, thirty-five years of democracy have sunk in, giving a once passive people the courage to press their demands on the state. Suddenly the legendary ungovernability of this continental nation, with fourteen major languages, three principal religions, and innumerable caste groups, has become all too manifest. As the demands made on the political system have grown, the ability of that system to accommodate them has diminished, and angry partisans have discovered that violent agitation works faster. India's democratic spirit is pouring through the holes in its weakened democratic institutions. Even Nehru himself probably couldn't have kept the holes from opening. But his daughter has made them wider and wider, threatening a flood she can scarcely control.

Mrs. Gandhi's party is a direct descendant of the Congress Party which her father ruled. Now, however, it's called the Congress (I), for "Indira," and works according to new rules. In Nehru's day the party included socialists and capitalists, regional chauvinists and Hindu chauvinists—practically everyone except the Communists. It absorbed, and variously disappointed, every significant interest. Nehru's Congress was built for consensus. His daughter shattered that consensus soon after she became Prime Minister in 1965. In order to break the power of the old party leaders, who were trying to limit her authority, Mrs. Gandhi deliberately split the Congress Party in two, and her half won the ensuing election handily.

But by 1975 popular disenchantment with her rule had reached such a pitch that she felt called upon to declare what amounted to martial law. Under the Emergency, as the episode is still called, she jailed opponents, censored the press, bullied the judiciary, and postponed elections. Two years later, she felt confident enough to permit those elections to go forward. She found, however, that she had misjudged the depth of national discontent, and in 1977 she suffered her one and only electoral defeat, at the hands of the Janata coalition. Rather than relinquish control of the defeated Congress, she then divided it once more, again gathering the loyalists and diehards about her into the Congress (I). A sleazy get-rich-quick crowd which clung to her son Sanjay quickly became dominant, and the independent-minded either shut up or left. By this time Nehru's old high-mindedness was gone, and the governing principle in selecting party leaders resembled, in the words of Raj Krishna, a prominent economist, "the anti-

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Darwinian selection of the un-fittest." Still, Mrs. Gandhi's tactic worked, and in 1980 she engineered a supremely satisfying return to power.

IT HAS BEEN so long since the Congress (I) was unsettled by an independent thought that it has become practically zombified. To appreciate the atmosphere inside the ruling party in 1984, you have to imagine some East European "people's republic" where giant posters blazon heroic truths in which nobody believes and the citizenry is told it stands united against conspirators within and enemies without. Yet the country itself remains as democratic as ever, practicing freedom of speech and of the press with the usual reckless abandon. Only in the dominant party is India's messy democracy absent.

No one except Congress (I) politicians seem to swallow the official mythology. My conversations with party leaders seemed even more ritualistic than on my last trip, in 1980. Certain conventions were always followed. The party, for example, must be said to have transcended ideology. "We are neither of the left or right," says J. K. Jain, secretary for parliamentary affairs. "Our ideology is to help the downtrodden and provide employment for the unemployed." The party must always be said to stand foursquare against capitalists and the rich—although its gigantic campaign chest, estimated at more than $100 million, scarcely comes from the poor. And the opposition must always be said to be absolutely wicked and selfish. "The opposition," says Tariq Anwar, president of the Youth Congress (I), "depends only on the vested interests. Our roots are with the peasants in the villages."

And then, of course, there is the cult of the leader. Congressmen are forever prefacing their pious declarations with slightly chilling phrases like "my party and my leader." Mrs. Gandhi is now trying to enlarge the space to which that loyalty is directed to include her son Rajiv, who became heir apparent after Sanjay died in a plane crash in 1980. Until that time Rajiv was an unassuming commercial pilot; since then he has become a party general secretary, and has surprised everyone by the nastiness he has brought to the task of savaging the opposition. In the last year or so, as he has consolidated his position within the party, Rajivolatry has reached grotesque proportions. At the party's national convention in Calcutta last December, Rajiv's bland countenance beamed from thousands of posters emblazoned, TODAY'S LEADER; TOMORROW'S HOPE. One booklet attributed to him the combined virtues of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, and Mrs. Gandhi herself; more than a man, he was "the morning star," showing the way to an eager nation.

Party leaders may be much too crafty and experienced for some of this self-hypnosis; but the party itself behaves as if its mythology were true. India's economic and social problems would appear to require drastic action; but party doctrine says that Mrs. Gandhi's Twenty-Point Program is rolling back the tyrannies of man and nature on every front. She herself declared that 120 million people had been lifted out of poverty since her election in 1980—which would constitute the swiftest economic development in world history, if only it were true. Industrial growth, family planning, mass education, land reform—all are moving according to the dictates of the sixth Five-Year Plan, despite the machinations of reactionary forces in league with the opposition. And not to worry about the problem of Bengali immigration, which led to the slaughter of more than a thousand villagers in Assam a year ago—that's been ironed out. Punjab has proved harder to gloss over, though the government has consistently claimed that the demands to which it keeps acceding are illegitimate, since the agitation has been provoked by Kashmiri separatists and Pakistani agents.

The only possible explanation for the government's complacency is that it would rather invent a pleasant reality than face a painful one. Neither Mrs. Gandhi nor her officials produced any evidence that 120 million peasants actually had crossed into the Promised Land. In fact, a 1981 study conducted by the Planning Commission found that almost 7 million people were annually being added *below* the poverty line.

India has no lack of antipoverty programs, along with the planners, village-level civil servants, cooperative banks, training centers, and so on to execute them. In this regard it is miles ahead of most Third World countries. Its problem is that it lacks the political will to make the programs work in the face of difficulty. Land reform is a perfect example. Since independence, according to Raj Krishna, a grand total of 4 million out of 370 million acres have been redistributed. Landlords, of course, are politically powerful, especially in northern states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where landholding patterns are the most skewed.

BY NOW everyone in India agrees that the bureaucracy has managed to throttle practically every sector of the Indian economy except the black market, which was created largely to evade it. Businesses still have to await permission for almost any kind of expansion. Companies have production targets, which they are not allowed to *exceed*. Corruption is a given. Mrs. Gandhi appointed a high-level commission to study the problem; the commission issued some mild recommendations; and nothing much happened. Bureaucrats, like landlords, are an entrenched class.

Mrs. Gandhi's inactivity in the face of corruption and incompetence has prompted her opponents to criticize her both for being undemocratic and for being ineffectually authoritarian, thus confusing the debate as well as the critics themselves. One senior Congress (I) politician compared the Prime Minister's "cold and ruthless" nature favorably to her father's gentleness. And then he added, "Yet the worst thing that could happen to India—my greatest fear—is one-person rule." In this contradictory assertion that India needs a democratic leader yet somehow doesn't deserve one, one can hear the ambiguity of millions of voters as they waver between their respect for, even awe of, Mrs. Gandhi and their dislike of her.

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The demand of the Sikhs (now dropped) for a semi-autonomous state reawakened the perennial problem of India's federal system. The struggle for power between the central government and the states is, in part, a proxy for deeper conflicts among ethnic, religious, linguistic, and caste loyalties and the idea, now glimmering and now vivid, of India as a single nation. There is no more delicate or dangerous issue. India's federal system has always favored the central government, which can take over a state's executive authority at will. Nehru rarely used that power; his daughter often does. The chief ministers of Congress (I)-ruled states serve at her pleasure; since 1980 she has deposed the chief minister in more than half of those states, in some cases more than once. These chief ministers tend to be ciphers whose local power base is shaky enough to keep them dependent on Delhi. In Nehru's day a chief minister reached his position through local, district, and state party primary elections. His daughter's Congress hasn't held party elections since 1972. Thus all important decisions, political as well as administrative, are made in Delhi, and power can be measured in proximity to Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv.

IF MRS. GANDHI has merely undermined state power in the seventeen states ruled by her own forces, she has tried to destroy it in most of the five ruled by the opposition. This jibes with the official mythology: since the opposition parties are anti-national and reactionary, it is only proper for members of Congress (I) to behave more like freedom fighters standing up against tyranny than like politicians who lost a fair fight. The effect is to delegitimize the whole idea of partisan politics.

Congress (I) has almost succeeded in turning Jammu and Kashmir into a police state by staging violent demonstrations, almost daily since late last year, demanding the resignation of the chief minister, Farooq Abdullah. Buses are burned, police stations attacked, political leaders beaten. In West Bengal Abdullah's car was stoned, not by thugs but by two leaders of the state Congress (I) Party. Abdullah's National Conference Party has responded in kind, thus giving credence to Congress (I) charges that the state is out of control. These tactics seem to be borrowed from the terrorist handbook: force the government to respond violently, escalate the chaos, and thus create a pretext to place the state under central control. Rajiv, meanwhile, has declared Abdullah a virtual Pakistani quisling—an incendiary charge in India. Pakistan, he said recently, is champing at the military bit; "anti-India" forces in neighboring Jammu and Kashmir must be dealt with ruthlessly; yet leaders are coddling and even supporting them. He ended this particular speech with an open threat—"*Agar haath chalana pada to chalaya jayega*"—"If the hand must strike, it will strike." The hand has not yet struck, but Abdullah has been made to cower satisfactorily.

The shakiness of the ruling coalition of opposition parties in the southwestern state of Karnataka has made such drastic measures unnecessary. There the Congress has taken the more traditional tack of bribing legislators—known as "engineering defections." After Karnataka's Janata government, led by Ramakrishna Hedge, had been in power for eight months, rumors began flying all over the capital city of Bangalore of legislators being offered staggering sums—tens of thousands of dollars or more—to defect. Then in October Hedge dropped a bomb—a tape recording of a Congress principal offering a Janata legislator, among other things, "a car similar to what Gundu Rao [former Congress chief minister] has—an Impala," if he would defect. One of the sweeter moments of the tape occurs when the congressman reassures the worried beneficiary that "there is no difference between Congress and Janata." Soon afterward Hedge produced a second taped bribe offer, along with the cash itself withdrawn from a Delhi bank.

Besides being wily enough to frustrate the Congress's designs, Hedge is an intelligent and dedicated administrator—probably the pick of the lot. Intellectuals who are inclined to dismiss the opposition as a pack of frustrated power seekers always make an exception for Hedge. The chief minister acknowledges his symbolic importance; should his rural employment and development programs succeed, Hedge argues, the Congress would be forced to concede the legitimacy of the opposition parties, and thus to wage political battles on their merits. "The politics of the opposition and the future of the opposition," he told me grandly, "will depend on the success of this government."

AT THE MOMENT it's not clear whether the opposition even *has* a future. The four parties that stunned the nation by defeating Mrs. Gandhi in 1977 were swept out in 1980 because they had spent the intervening years abusing each other in full view of the public. A dissident faction of the Janata coalition actually conspired with Sanjay Gandhi to discredit the administration of the Janata Prime Minister, Morarji Desai; the Desai government fell, and then so did that of his successor, Charan Singh, of the Lok Dal Party. Today Charan Singh and his supporters, and Morarji Desai and his supporters, remain at daggers drawn. The "left alliance" and the "right alliance" scarcely speak to one another, and in any case each can barely keep its own house in order. (Desai, a rightist, is in the left alliance, while Singh, a leftist of sorts, is in the right alliance.) Every week comes a rumor of a new coalition, a new reconciliation. Everything is subject to change except the cast of characters: the leaders who drove the Janata coalition into the ground, most of them over 65, several over 75 (Desai is 88), remain in control of the rickety opposition vehicle.

By now practically every leader in the opposition has his own party. On the left is the Janata Party, whose split several years back led to the founding of the more right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party; the Democratic Socialist Party, invented by the pro-Soviet H. N. Bahugana after he had left, successively, most of the opposition parties and the Congress (I); several regional alignments; and, loosely

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affiliated, the two Communist parties, pro- and anti-Soviet. On the right, more or less, are the B.J.P., with an urban constituency drawing on tradesmen and Hindu chauvinists, and the Lok Dal, popular among the rising peasant class of the north. Innumerable smaller parties, like the Congress (J)—for its founder, Jagjivan Ram—round out the list.

Yet the fact remains that all the fresh thinking in Indian politics is done by the opposition parties. "If you have intellectual integrity," as Jaswant Singh says, "you cannot remain in the Congress." The squabbling neighbors that once lived in the Congress (I) now live in the opposition. The newest families on the block are a number of ethnic-based parties at the state level. These seem to grow in popularity the more Mrs. Gandhi tries to centralize the Congress and the government. The current darling of the opposition is N. T. Rama Rao, a former film star whose Telegu Desam Party swamped the Congress in early 1983 in a traditional stronghold in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. Ethnic or regional chauvinism is a dangerous card to play in Indian politics. But the idea of "local control" could prove to be both powerful and unifying.

In all probability the opposition parties will compete against one another as well as against Mrs. Gandhi in the upcoming national elections, which must be held before the end of January 1985. This should guarantee a victory to the Congress (I), which remains a formidable election machine. But should the Congress win with a much diminished majority, as seems likely given the growing resistance to Mrs. Gandhi, or even be forced into a coalition, its historic status as India's dominant party could begin to slip. Should this happen, as a number of political insiders expect, India could enter a period of unprecedented instability, though also, perhaps, of welcome experimentation and creativity.

"The arena of politics," says India's leading political scientist, Rajni Kothari, "is shifting away from competition at the electoral level." As the formal political system has degenerated into a melodramatic shadow play of clashing ambitions, he argues, elections no longer express the mood of Indian voters. It's not just "defection engineers" who have noticed that there's not much to choose from among the parties. In a village in Uttar Pradesh, a group of peasants told me that the only reason they were voting for the Congress (I) candidate was that he was a powerful man, and they were afraid not to vote for him. In any case, they agreed, all politicians were thieves.

People with a grievance, says Kothari, no longer wait for the political system to adjudicate it; rather, in Gandhian fashion—but rarely, alas, nonviolently—they choose direct action. There is no "movement," but simply an increasing number of isolated actions. Untouchables, known as Scheduled Castes, demand that upper-caste landlords raise their daily wages, or permit them to pasture their animals on common lands. "Tribals"—aboriginal hill people—block roads and manhandle government officers to prevent the construction of a dam which will flood their lands without what they regard as adequate compensation. For the last ten years the women of Gopeshwar, in the foothills of the Himalayas, have led a now

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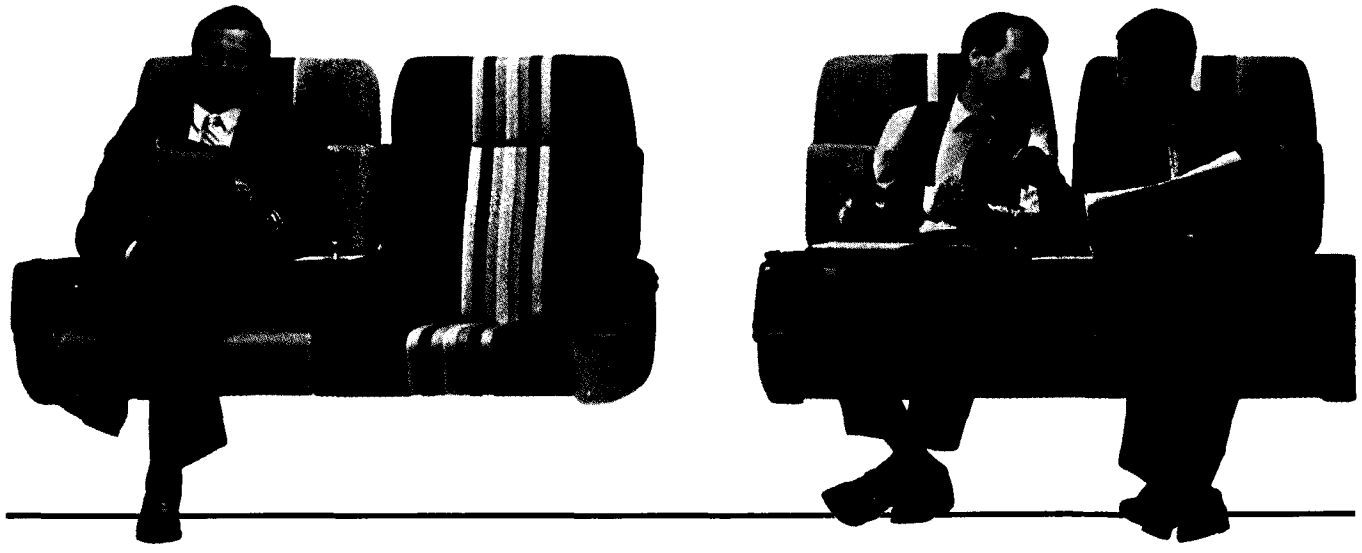

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legendary movement called *Chipko Andolan*—"Tree Hugging"—to prevent deforestation. Now the women are clamoring to sit on the forest *panchayats*, or local governing boards—a shocking demand in a male-dominated society.

The poor in India have been emboldened by the official left-wing cliché that they are victims of oppression. Janki Devi, a manual laborer in the industrial city of Kanpur, in central U.P., works herself into a rage as she recounts her struggle for better working and living conditions—struggles that included, incredibly, a *gherao*, or sit-in, inside the home of the lofty district magistrate. "Oh, these political leaders," she fairly spits, "they give us encouragement, but they always find a reason to leave us."

Whether anger and frustration like Janki Devi's give rise to the terrifying mob violence that shredded Assam last year, or to the sort of organized movements mentioned above, is largely a question of leadership. Here something else is going on, which is also diffuse but unmistakable—and profoundly encouraging. Kothari speaks of the rise of "a new class of political actors"—educated, middle-class activists who have taken up the Gandhian tradition of "constructive work" among the poor. These activists are conducting India's most exciting debate. They are asking themselves about the relationship of their local work and their model developments to economic, political, and social justice at the national level, and what many of them are concluding is that political engagement is unavoidable. "Every time I build a beautiful new slum township," says Kirtee Shah, an architect, developer, lecturer, and dreamer of better worlds in the western state of Gujurat, "I give the Congress a new vote bank [by satisfying the poor]. Possibly I do more harm than good." Shah contemplates, a bit fantastically, the idea of leaving others to build model slums while he goes into politics himself. He and others like him could fundamentally reshape the tedious partisan debate.

Raucous politics is unavoidable; this is an irreducible fact of Indian life. Because Nehru understood this, he often sacrificed his idea of progress to let the political process take its confusing way. Not so Mrs. Gandhi; during the Emergency she tried to convince the nation that it had become a terrific machine of development. Sanjay told her that the people would shut up if she stuffed some bread in their mouths. The people proved in 1977 that they were not convinced. Yet the idea persists among those who sigh for an "authoritarian democracy."

It won't wash. It's too late to convince any of the vast welter of classes, castes, religions, regions, and language groups to keep their quiet in the name of national unity, or even bread. It's too late to shoehorn them back into one tidy party. India's political system has to be a noisy mess; the national idea, which became a reality during the Independence struggle, can be sustained only if all the local conflicting voices are heard and heeded. Mrs. Gandhi's attempt to feed the nation on heroic fantasies cannot work for long; neither can her attempt to delegitimize political contest. Millions of uneducated Indians have taken seriously the promises of democracy. It is in a truly responsive political process, and not in the demand for submission and hero worship, that India's hopes lie. □

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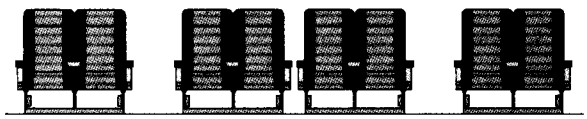

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Mystery, A Mutiny

Of all the mysteries in art, none is more mysterious to me than acting, the core of good acting. The more that I think I've learned about acting, the more clearly I recognize that whatever I've learned only underscores the central mystery. For example, take Marcello Mastroianni. I've been watching him for almost thirty years. I first saw him on stage, as Biff in a Roman production of *Death of a Salesman* (my one experience of him in the theater). I can't count the Mastroianni films I've seen since then, from such achievements as his performances in *La Notte* and *8½* and *The Organizer* and *Big Deal on Madonna Street* through lesser performances, including some to which he seemed to have sent a Doppelgänger while he was off on holiday. Many of his best films I've seen more than once, some of them many times; and after all these encounters with his acting, which made me think I knew something about it, when he made his entrance in *Gabriela*, I was wonderstruck. I could only realize that I was seeing the start of a good performance, could only ask myself: "How in the world does he do it?"

Gabriela
(MGM/UA Classics)

The Bounty
(Orion)

Gabriela is a Brazilian film, set in Bahia in 1925. Mastroianni appeared very near the start, walking down the main street of a town in a dingy white suit, and before he had been on screen four seconds, I began to smile. Mastroianni had informed me that this man was comic, possibly comic-pathetic. Nothing blatant was displayed externally: no tic or fluttering or anything of that kind. He was just walking along fairly briskly, fairly intent on his errand; yet I got the impression of a faintly overripe man in early middle age, a bit weary but not depressed, with his share of disappointments but without dejection, who knew that life had probably played him for a fool but who was getting his revenge by enjoying his tiny province of folly.

It's exactly wrong to say that I proved to be right. It's Mastroianni who proved to be right. Every development of the character that followed grew from the initial impression. It's possible to say that, from one aspect, there are two kinds of performance (depending to a great extent on the requirements of the work itself). One is the performance that begins with a "statement," then expands linearly—the performance that continually elicits the pleasurable "Oh!" of logical surprise. The other is the performance that deepens an initial précis, which continually elicits the equally pleasurable "Of course" of recognition. An example of the former: Mastroianni in *The Organizer*; of the latter, Mastroianni in *Gabriela*. And the second sort drives home even more sharply the plaintive, admiring question: How does he do it?

None of this is to say that *Gabriela* is itself of much interest. It's a laborious and florid film, derived from a novel by Jorge Amado and directed by Bruno Barreto who did *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*. Apparently *Gabriela* was made for the same basic reason as *Dona Flor*: to exhibit the charms—not facial—of Sonia Braga. Here she is a peasant girl who comes to town looking for a job, who is taken on, quite dispassionately, by Mastroianni as housekeeper-cook, and who quickly alters his dispassion.

Mastroianni's character is nicknamed the Turk: he's the son of an Arab father and Neapolitan mother who somehow drifted to this town, where he owns a congenial café that is a hangout for the town biggies. Various dim plot strands run through: the deterioration of machismo, especially a man's right—nay, obligation—to kill an unfaithful woman; the objections of the town's oligarchy to economic progress because it threatens their power; and, chief and worst of all, the deleterious effect of marriage on the Turk's relationship with Gabriela. The symbolism throughout is so thick that you would need a machete to hack through it, if it were worthwhile. Most of the cast are adequate except for Braga, whose only assets are the speed with which she unclothes, the body she reveals, and her skill at miming intercourse.

Mastroianni mimes it with her, but since, unlike Braga, he doesn't really need to do this sort of thing in order to get himself on screen, it's not only superfluous, it's a bit embarrassing. What's really interesting is to see his character unfold through the film, like a flower from one of those Japanese bulbs that just need to be placed in water to bloom: a man rueful yet content, a wanderer who has found a harbor in his café, where he can hunch behind the bar and watch the world that washed him here, snacking at life humorously as his customers snack at Gabriela's hors d'oeuvres.

And it's all implied in those first few seconds. What a wonderful mystery.

Heaven knows (if heaven cares) how many films have been made about sailing ships, most of which of course include storm sequences; but I can't re-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Good Fight. Documentary, politically incomplete but personally gripping. Survivors of the Lincoln Brigade remember the Spanish Civil War. (Reviewed 4/23/84)

Romancing the Stone. Spoofing the spurious. A woman who writes wild adventure romances gets entangled in adventures wilder than her fiction. Clever. (5/7/84)

Sugar Cane Alley. Euzhan Palcy, a black Martinique woman, tells a tender, vivid story about a black Martinique schoolboy's struggle to rise. (4/30/84)

This Is Spinal Tap. Sharp-toothed parody of a documentary about a British rock group in the U.S. Funny even when you're not laughing. (5/14/84)

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member any that made the experience of ship and sea and storm more vivid than *The Bounty*. This is the third film about the British naval mutiny of 1789. The first, the Gable-Laughton version, is stamped on our minds; the second, with Marlon Brando and Trevor Howard, is well forgotten. This third version (says *Variety*) was initiated by David Lean as a two-film project intended to tell the whole story and straighten out the facts. Lean engaged the exceptionally gifted Robert Bolt as screenwriter (*Lawrence of Arabia* was only one of his previous jobs for Lean) and also signed Anthony Hopkins as Bligh. For some reason Lean left the project, which was then reduced to one film. Bolt and Hopkins remained; Roger Donaldson, the New Zealander who made the gritty contemporary *Smash Palace*, was brought in to direct, and Mel Gibson, the Australian best known for *Mad Max* and *The Year of Living Dangerously*, took on Fletcher Christian, the leader of the mutiny. Locations were found in Tahiti and New Zealand, and after many months and many millions, *The Bounty* emerged—well enough worth it.

This is the sort of film that confronts the unavoidable clichés of its genre and does its best to treat them freshly. The grimy details of fo'c's'le life, the petty pomps of the captain's table, the freshet of barebreasted Tahitian maidens, the blackening clouds of mutiny, the punishments, the setting-adrift of Bligh and supporters in a small boat, the course of the *Bounty* for Pitcairn Island—all these are treated as if the word "remake" were unknown to anyone concerned. One addition to the story, supposedly factual, is the agony that Christian goes through in leading the mutiny. Unlike previous Christians, he is not a whole-souled leader of revolt: he is torn between loyalty and liberty. One tonal alteration is in Bligh's severity. He doesn't seem to relish it particularly, as did previous Blighs. (Remember Laughton's "Keelhaul the man"?) He is simply intransigent.

The story, to refresh you, deals with a naval ship's voyage to Tahiti, there to take on a cargo of breadfruit plants and transport them to Jamaica where they are to be introduced as cheap food for slaves. On the outward voyage, Bligh nearly wrecks his ship by trying to round Cape Horn; storms finally force him to change course and go round the Cape of Good Hope. On the return trip, he again sets course for Cape Horn, and

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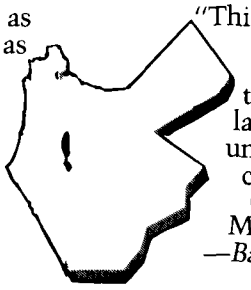

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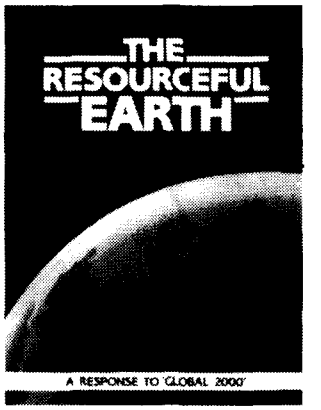

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that's when the crew, restive anyway, erupts. They put Bligh and friends in a small boat and throw the plants overboard. The mutineers eventually sail the *Bounty* to Pitcairn Island. (Their descendants still live there. Some Tahitian women were aboard.) Bligh, with only a compass, navigates the small boat over thirty-six hundred miles to Timor, then returns to London and exoneration. (Later, Bligh made a second voyage for breadfruit and succeeded. His subsequent career had its blotches, but he ended up an admiral.)

Hopkins acts with exceptional vigor and intelligence. His Bligh has an accent—Devonshire, I assume, since Bligh was born in Plymouth—not only for accuracy but to set him apart from the more la-di-da officers around him, thus to give him added motive for strictness. He holds to his duty like a mountaineer clinging to a rope. Gibson is a mite too modern as Christian, and he can't handle the outburst scene of agony; but in the understated scenes, he has some lean-jawed strength.

The script nicely counterpoises its two conflicts: between command and forbearance; between two cultures, British and Tahitian; and it shows the first conflict heightened by the second. Donaldson is especially deft with the shipboard material and is helped by good editors, Tony Lawson and Barrie Vince. The best praise for the film is that the two previous versions don't nag at our enjoyment of it.

New space and hopes for The Museum of Modern Art.

MOMA Grows Up

By Eugene Victor Thaw

YOU CANNOT, of course, please everyone, no matter what you do, especially if you are The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Founded by a group of discriminating collectors in 1929, the museum was brought to greatness and fame by the late Alfred Barr, whose eye and art historical probity established the canon of modernism. This canon has been challenged but not yet overturned, and now MOMA is reopening in a much enlarged building after nearly four years of severely limited activity due to construction. With the reopening comes a rehash of the old arguments about the role and the philosophy of the museum that have surfaced on and off for years. Gertrude Stein's dictum that you can be modern or you can be a museum, but you can't be both, is perhaps the most concise critique. Putting it a little differently, many say that MOMA is a victim of its own success: modernism is now so completely assimilated that it doesn't need to be defended or proselytized. Meanwhile other constituencies—artists, dealers, collectors, and groupies—clamor for more strictly contemporary art. They are opposed by a camp that prefers historic modernism—art that has stood the tests of time and criticism and is embodied in the museum's great permanent collection.

However spurious most of these arguments are, they have put the MOMA staff and board of trustees on the defensive. Statements have begun appearing in the press confirming that yes indeed, we are going to be very contemporary again! Please give us a chance. We are sorry for any lapses in the past, but we had no space, we were busy building, or the whole place was filled with Picassos.

Defensiveness is not new to MOMA. Earlier Alfred Barr and the museum were accused of failing properly to identify the importance of American abstract expressionism while it was evolving. Overcompensating for that error (which has since been corrected by expensive acquisitions for the permanent collection), the curators have tended to certify and collect nearly everything that has happened since. In a thoughtful but unnecessarily bitchy essay in *The New Criterion* (March 1984) entitled "Waiting for Kynaston," Hilton Kramer argues that MOMA is no longer the defining force for either quality or historical relevance that it used to be; now that so many museums in New York and elsewhere are working the same territory, MOMA doesn't set standards and edit contemporary developments the way it once did.

Certainly a sense of discrimination is missing from the opening exhibition of work by more than 150 artists whose reputations have been made only in the last decade. (The show was organized by Kynaston McShine, the curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture named in Kramer's title.) From the size of the representation it is hard to imagine that much editorial judgment was exercised. Instead, it seems to be an attempt to cover all bases and keep as many balls in the air as possible. MOMA's long range program for contemporary art will consist of small "works in progress" exhibitions of artists in mid-career, grouped together as Dorothy Miller used to do at MOMA in the 1950s in her famous surveys, "12 Americans," "15 Americans," etc. It is significant, however, that while the program's format is settled, the artists have not yet been chosen.

Yet MOMA's somewhat eclectic approach to contemporary art is perhaps more a reflection of the times than a failure of sustained, selective judgment. The last third of this century is a curiously aimless and chaotic period in art. Reaction against the marketplace and its manipulations has caused some artists to be suspicious of the work of art itself; rampant revisionism and camp taste have established powerful coteries declaring the end of modernism; political and feminist would-be commissars have been demanding an art of commitment, subordinating aesthetic or formal content. Despite all the swirling of publicity and debate, however, no major figures have lately arisen around whom serious art movements tend to coalesce. No Manet, no Picasso, no Pollock, nor even a spellbinder like Jasper Johns is anywhere in sight.

I am not enough of an architecture critic to attempt a judgment of the new building itself but, happily, I can report that the painting and sculpture galleries housing the permanent collection are exactly what I had hoped for. The rooms are smallish, maze-like, white-walled, and mostly carpeted. They are

Eugene Victor Thaw, an art dealer in New York, is co-author of *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (Yale University Press).

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faithful to the installation style of MOMA which many of us—not only those who grew up with it—consider the most successful way to display modern art. Both small and large works live well in this environment, and major canvases by Matisse, Picasso, and Léger, among others, do not get reduced to postage stamps as they do, for instance, at the Metropolitan Museum.

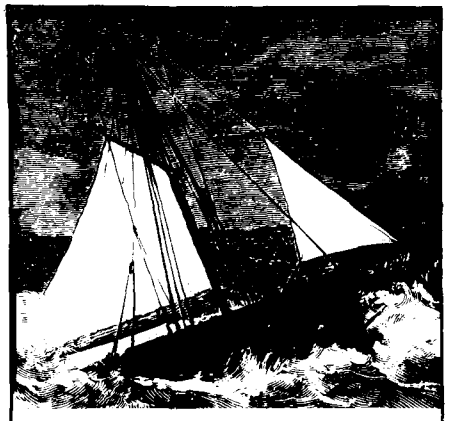
The great collections of MOMA, now fully displayed for the first time, together with loans of promised gifts brought in for the occasion, are nothing short of breathtaking. Even without the *Guernica*, the quality and range of MOMA's holdings are a visual demonstration of the arguments for the museum's *raison d'être*. As the century advances, the period that encompasses strictly contemporary art shrinks in proportion to the art of earlier decades. It is the collection, ultimately, which edits and explains what has really been happening around us.

As good as the collection is, however, the current unveiling reveals some weaknesses. Fauvism is much less well represented than Cubism; van Gogh is weak compared to Cézanne; only one Edvard Munch—and a less than thrilling one—represents the great northern psychotic expressionist; and the collection of American modernists between the two world wars is pretty poor, certainly overshadowed by the much richer holdings in the Whitney and Metropolitan Museums.

OVER THE many years since Alfred Barr's time, William Rubin, the director of the Department of Paintings and Sculpture, has dedicated himself to refining and completing the historic collection—by hook or by crook, if necessary. Since the museum's purchase funds are hardly commensurate with today's astronomical prices for great works of modern art, Rubin (like Barr before him) has sold, traded, exchanged, borrowed, begged, and stood on his head, if need be, calling in all the chips of an influential museum in order to get what was required. An exchange with the Guggenheim Museum of decent, but expendable, paintings by Matisse and Picasso brought in two early Kandinskys, part of a set of four of which MOMA owned the other two. Rubin thus reunited a great work of art and made Kandinsky, a crucial early modernist, adequately represented. Of the stunning wall of oils by Paul Klee, nearly one-half have come to the museum as the result of Rubin's manipulations. One could tell stories galore about the Pollocks, the Sidney Janis donation, the collecting by trustees, the system of promised gifts, the Gertrude Stein collection, and more. At MOMA, acquisition is accompanied by Sturm und Drang involving powerful personalities, egos, and social ambitions, but the system works and the collection thrives.

I HAVE been discussing MOMA as if it were only a museum of paintings. It is much more, of course, and the new spaces at its disposal will give renewed vigor to its other departments. The drawing and print divisions have separate permanent galleries for their dazzlingly rich holdings, as well as for temporary exhibitions. Both architecture and design are aspects of MOMA's mission which have had checkered careers and less cultural influence lately than might have been expected. Here it is not so much the role of the collections that can be relied on as repositories of taste and of truth; what is needed are concepts and a historical perspective articulated by authoritative voices. With MOMA in the limelight once again it is to be hoped that these two departments will show some of the pioneering creativity of earlier years. Photography as an art form has a history as old as the invention of the camera, but as a subject for criticism and as a field for collecting it has radically changed in the last decade. MOMA was once nearly all we had as a resource in this area; now it needs to find its place in a crowded and exploited photography world in which even the certainties about what is art are open to question. MOMA's film institute, once a headquarters for serious film buffs, faces a similar challenge at a time when serious film collections and theaters exist across the country.

That MOMA incorporates all the divisions of historic modernism except the performing arts (and it does have a collection of theater design) is exemplary. The museum may, however, include too much to be able to do everything well. Even if one takes account of all the manifestos and "isms" of the earlier part of our century, the terrible wars and the advancing technologies, the days of MOMA's youth seem like a remote golden age compared to the complexities of civilization at this moment. MOMA is trying to keep up, repeating



"Just for a few moments your attention I crave/ While I relate a sad death on the wave."

So began one of the ballads written about a macabre incident that took place one hundred years ago. Two highly respectable British seamen, on being cast adrift from the foundered yacht Mignonette, killed and ate a young shipmate in order to survive themselves. Their subsequent trial was a cause célèbre at the time.

But this was no mere passing sensation. The case–Regina v. Dudley and Stephens–is a leading one, well known to all students of Anglo-American law. In CANNIBALISM AND THE COMMON LAW, A. W. Brian Simpson has recreated not only the drama of the trial but the atmosphere of the Victorian era in which it unfolded. He has spun an absorbing tale of wrecks and heroism and of the clash between the law of the land and the law of the sea. He amplifies his story with legends and anecdotes–often laced with black humor–of other celebrated cannibals such as the American frontiersman, Alferd Packer who is reputed to have eaten most of the Democrats in a Colorado county.

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A. W. BRIAN SIMPSON

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the verities that have worked so well for it in the past, keeping an eye open for any signals that might seem worth tracking. In the absence of anything better in our current battered cultural scene—dominated by trivia, hype, plagiarism, camp, deconstruction, and unrestrained revisionism—I, for one, am grateful to have back the beacon of my youth for whatever candlepower the old lamp can still throw into the darkness.

WICKED WITCHES OF THE NORTH

The Witches of Eastwick
by John Updike

(Knopf, 336 pp., $15.95)

Even in these "postmodern" times, the witch figure continues to excite us. Fully vested by centuries of residence in our psyches, she sallies forth with amazing vigor each time we re-imagine her. Though she assumes a variety of shapes, depending upon the needs and the bugaboos of the culture that summons her, she always brings with her the dread and fascinating certainty of change—and all the outcry and havoc attendant upon any transformation that threatens the status quo.

Witches also provide wonderfully suggestive vehicles for fictional purposes. "Let us respectfully construe the word 'witch' as 'free woman,' " John Updike wrote in his review of a 1978 reissue of Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*, first published in 1926. He evolved this definition, he intimates in the review, after having recommended to a woman friend Warner's darkly subtle novel about a well-bred English spinster who becomes a witch. "Of course, that's what men like to tell us," retorted the woman to Updike. "Either marry one of them or become a witch."

It's my guess that Mr. Updike, being one of those sly hoarders of quotidian fallout, let the seed of that snappy female retort, along with the enticing portrait of Laura Willowes abandoning her tiresome identity of "Aunt Lolly" in order to join a witch coven in Great Mop, Buckinghamshire, germinate with him until, four or five years later, he sprouted his own triad of witches who make magic and then malice up in "Eastwick," Rhode Island, in the post-Woodstock/Vietnam era.

"[Women] know they are dynamite," Laura Willowes tells the Devil as they lounge on a grassy bank one afternoon,

> and [they] long for the concussion that may justify them. Some may get religion, then they're all right, I expect. But for the others, for so many, what can there be but witchcraft? That strikes them real. Even if other people still find them quite safe and usual, and go on poking with them, they know in their hearts how dangerous, how incalculable, how extraordinary they are. Even if they never do anything with their witchcraft, they know it's there—ready!

Updike's three witches (like so many of their female contemporaries in the early 1970s) find their potencies exploding within them as soon as they divorce their husbands and become free women. In addition to definite magical powers, Alexandra discovers her gift for sculpture (she makes sexy little clay figurines called "bubbies," which sell very well in the local shops). Jane, a piano teacher by day, begins playing her cello at odd moonlit hours, abashing her neighbors with her burning intensity. Sukie, driven by reduced financial circumstances, takes a job writing gossipy pieces for the town's weekly paper.

Every Thursday the three meet at one or another's house,

> and into their third drinks they could erect a cone of power above them like a tent to the zenith, and know at the base of their bellies who was sick, who was sinking into debt, who was loved, who was frantic, who was burning, who was asleep in a remission of life's bad luck. . . .

All three know they have become local scandals for neglecting their children, sleeping with married men, and zestfully pursuing their own interests, as witches through the centuries have been known to do. But, when we meet them, they are flying high on their newfound powers, liking themselves, and feeling that "a conspiracy of women upholds the world." Alexandra, the plump outdoorsy one, reflects that she is a "large, drifting style of witch, always spreading herself thin to invite impressions and merge with the landscape," whereas Jane is "hot, short, concentrated like a pencil point," and Sukie, busy gathering news all day, has "an oscillating essence." The magic they exert themselves to produce at this stage is a collusion with the elements to help along their personal causes, mostly; they revel in mischief, too, but nothing spiteful or really malevolent. (Alexandra produces a storm at the beach—to clear it of people so her dog may run unleashed—that is a virtuoso exposition of how naturalism, if nudged, might produce miracles.)

THEN ENTER a shaggy, hirsute man named Van Horne. He buys an old mansion near the beach, moves in several pianos and a Pop Art collection, installs lab equipment for his research into a new source of energy, lays an all-weather tennis court, and installs a luxurious sunken hot tub. He sets the town buzzing, and, in no time at all, has completely bewitched the witches. They eagerly abandon their "cone of power" in order to compete for his attentions. A fearless pianist, he plays duets with Jane; he promises Alexandra if she'll make her clay "bubbies" bigger, he'll sell them to a New York art dealer; he lunches with Sukie and, just like a girlfriend, discusses her plans to seduce her boss, the henpecked newspaper editor.

Playing doubles with Van Horne on his new court, the witches descend to kindergarten tricks, turning one another's tennis balls into egg yolks, toads, or birds that fly away. They consort with their host in his hot tub, caressing one another and passing tokes of cannabis between ministering to his demands. Afterwards they report to one another that his emissions as well as his nether regions are "ice cold."

How can Van Horne, who is rather coarse and spits when he talks and has "incongruously small feet," so effortlessly captivate these interesting modern witches just brimming with untried possibilities? Well, because he's the Devil, that's why. "The deuell caused all the company to com and kiss his ers, quhilk they said was cauld lyk yce," Updike quotes from sixteenth-century

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witch lore in a chapter heading, just to make sure we catch the later connection with Van Horne's cold "ers."

Then when the hot tub activities are bubbling like a cauldron, the malefica are unleashed. Things in town turn topsy-turvy. Four people die. What are we to make of these happenings? Are the witches to blame? (They repentantly believe they might have abetted the death of one young woman by making a doll of her—voodoo style—and sticking a needle through the doll's heart.) Or were those bad things already programmed by nature to have happened anyway? (Van Horne, invited to preach at the local Unitarian Church whose minister has been blown up while making bombs with his revolutionary girlfriend, gives a rather funny sermon extolling the horrors in nature, concluding with: "Now I ask you, isn't it terrible? Couldn't you have done better, given the resources? I sure as hell could have. So vote for me next time. O.K.? Amen.")

SO, IS *The Witches of Eastwick* merely a wicked entertainment, with lots (and lots) of sex, and everybody's backside lovingly described, plus a soupçon or two of provocative theology? Or are there some deeper inferences the author wishes us to draw, about how creativity and human potential can be sapped, about the destructiveness that results when witchery descends to bitchery? Is he, perhaps, illustrating something timely about the enfeebled, regressive state of affairs that will result if women become terrified of their powers and flee from the incumbent responsibilities of those powers? The commonplace, almost tongue-in-cheek fates he finally metes out to his Alexandra, Jane, and Sukie might point this way. Or it might not. Mr. Updike, like his puckish, anonymous narrator who weaves in and out of the novel like smoke, remains elusive and noncommital to the end.

Perhaps it is cloddish to ask that a writer as bewitching as Updike serve us philosophy, too. But why not? In book after book, Updike's fine, funny, impressionistic art strips the dull casings of everydayness from objects we have known all our lives, and makes them shine with fresh, new connections. Maybe that's enough. And maybe it isn't. Maybe he is letting his talent for magical prose and mere wickedness undermine his potential for greatness, just as he let Van Horne undermine those ebullient witches at the waxing of their powers. I wish, at any rate, that he would risk a bold plunge into profundity rather than continuing to flirt playfully around its edges, then diving inveterately back into the sad, familiar slosh of small-town sex and its communal ripples. Though, one has to admit, he does it charmingly.

When I finished *The Witches of Eastwick*, I felt like Laura Willowes at the end of that other witch-book, *Lolly Willowes*. After her conversation with the Devil, Laura sits, bemused by the tract of flattened grass at her side where he has left his imprint, and contemplates his charm. But then she recalls that when she started asking him the really serious questions he had gotten up and gone away.

GAIL GODWIN

Gail Godwin's most recent novel is *A Mother and Two Daughters* (Viking). Her new novel, *The Finishing School*, will be published by Viking next year.

THE WHOLE MOLE CATALOGUE

New Lies For Old
by Anatoliy Golitsyn

(Dodd, Mead, 592 pp., $19.95)

In 1921 a secret group called the Trust emerged in the Soviet Union as the main organized opposition to the Communist regime. Claiming to have agents in powerful positions inside Soviet ministries, the Trust quickly established contact with groups of dissident exiles in France, Finland, Austria, and Germany and offered to work with them inside Russia to bring down the Communists. Within a year, the Trust was supplying reams of secret documents to the exile groups—who in turn were selling them piecemeal to the intelligence services of nine Western countries. The Trust was also organizing underground routes for the escape of dissidents and their families to the West. Throughout the mid-1920s, the Trust arranged for exile leaders to travel clandestinely to Moscow for meetings with members of the conspiracy. There were other demonstrations of the group's growing power as well; it plotted political prisoners' escapes from prisons and helped others evade the surveillance of the secret police.

What emerged from these bold activities of the Trust, as well as from the secret reports it intercepted, was that the Communists were rapidly losing control of Russia and that there was widespread opposition to the government. The message, which was passed on to Western intelligence services, was that the Soviet regime now mustered support for itself only by invoking the threat of foreign intervention: if this threat was removed, the Communists would be driven from office. It was a message that France, England, and other Western governments wanted to hear, since it meant they could end their expensive embargoes and military efforts, and leave the task of overthrowing communism to the dissident movement.

As it turned out, the Trust was a Soviet deception, organized by Lenin to mislead Western nations into believing that their political and economic sanctions were inadvertently helping, rather than hurting, his hold on the country. As a creature of the Soviet secret police, the Trust had no difficulty in arranging cross-border forays and escapes, or a constant stream of "secret" reports. Indeed, the money it received from Western intelligence for these services reportedly financed all Soviet foreign intelligence for a decade. When the head of the Trust, a Soviet intelligence officer named Edward Opperput, defected in Helsinki, Finland, in 1927 and revealed the extent of the sting operation, the exile groups and intelligence services that had been skillfully duped over the course of six years were understandably demoralized.

Some thirty-four years later, the defection of another Soviet intelligence officer in Helsinki, Finland, K.G.B. Major Anatoliy Golitsyn, again raised the unnerving specter of the Trust.

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After evaluating the information he provided, James Angleton, the head of the C.I.A.'s counterintelligence staff, concluded that Golitsyn was "the most valuable defector ever to reach the West." He even arranged for him to meet with with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to outline his views on Soviet deception. Angleton also arranged for Golitsyn to consult with intelligence chiefs in France, England, Israel, and other allied nations. In these meetings, Golitsyn stressed that the Soviet Union intended to use stealth and disinformation to gain the Western credits and technology it required to complete its military superiority. He specifically cited evidence that the K.G.B. had methodically penetrated Western intelligence systems and established double agents to feed disinformation into them.

Golitsyn's picture of Soviet double agents provided the C.I.A. and F.B.I. with pieces of a Moscow-designed deception that ran directly counter to the prevailing view within the intelligence services; the C.I.A. believed their sources in Soviet intelligence were bona fide informants. F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover, for example, dismissed Golitsyn as a "paranoid." Angleton recalls that, even in the inner sanctum of the C.I.A., "Many of his views were greeted mistakenly with disbelief, even ridicule at the time." Moreover, at the political level, Golitsyn's message about Soviet strategic disinformation was, Angleton lamented, "overlooked in the blurred and distorted perspective of détente." By the late 1960s, the bitter argument inside the C.I.A. over the scope of Soviet deception had all but paralyzed the intelligence-gathering operations of its Soviet Bloc Division. The debate was resolved only in 1973 with the forced resignation of Angleton, the disbanding of his counterintelligence staff, and the effective expungement of Golitsyn's deception thesis from any operational considerations.

What was this great debate all about? Finally, after twenty-three years, the substance of Golitsyn's revelations has emerged publicly in his book, *New Lies For Old*. Based on his access to K.G.B. files and personnel prior to his defection, Golitsyn, with a little assistance from his supporters in the United States and British counterintelligence, now revives the secret debate that divided and confounded American intelligence for more than a decade. Here is the world according to Golitsyn—at least volume one. The central premise is that the Communist camp is essentially a Soviet monolith. All major disputes within the bloc were actually resolved in the late 1950s. In 1959, however, the politburo decided to mask this solid core of strength by feigning schisms with members of the bloc. To orchestrate this deception, the K.G.B. was reorganized and, through its newly constituted Department of Disinformation, it projected the illusion that Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, and China were all governed by potentially anti-Soviet regimes. Instead of "puppets" and "satellites," the Eastern bloc was, if the deception was accepted, composed of independent Communist states, each attempting to resist Soviet hegemony. The objective for shamming dissidence in the Eastern bloc was to lure the West into accepting, and even assisting, the covert expansion of the Soviet empire.

SPECIFICALLY, Golitsyn describes eight Soviet deceptions, which together constituted this grand strategy for winning without fighting. Evidence, however, is completely lacking for the last four cases—Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Eurocommunism—all of which occurred well after he defected from the K.G.B. They are, in any case, merely extrapolated from the logic and methods employed in the four earlier cases for which he claims some inside access. These deceptions are worth considering in some detail.

The first deception involves the rift between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Golitsyn told the C.I.A. about it early in 1962. He claimed that he had learned at a K.G.B. training session that Khrushchev and Tito, after secretly settling their dispute, decided to feign the continuance of the conflict. The purposes of this subterfuge were, first, to prevent any abrupt cutoff in Western economic and military aid to Yugoslavia and, second, to give Tito time to revise his political stance inside the country. To support this immense deception, the Soviet Union also then faked an ideological split with Albania. To convey the message to the West, the Soviets planted esoteric terms in the Albanian party

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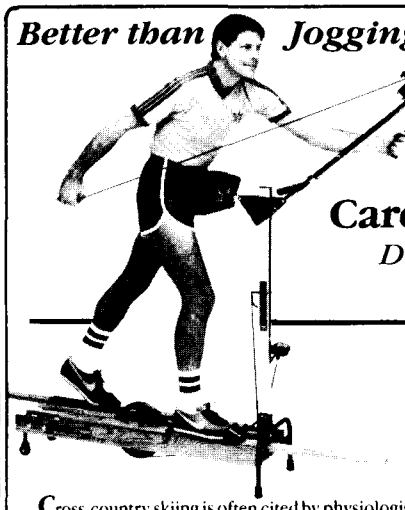

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dialogues, which they knew would be interpreted by U.S. intelligence as evidence of a breakdown in Soviet-Albanian relations. This, according to Golitsyn, constituted a second major Soviet deception.

THE PROBLEM with both these cases is that U.S. intelligence was unable to find confirming evidence, either from other defectors or from intercepted messages since Golitsyn's defection. Moreover, in retrospect, it is evident that the accounts did not stand the test of time. Golitsyn's analyses predicted an increased level in covert—but detectable—military and political cooperation between the secret allies, especially during moments of crisis. There was no sign of such activity, however, during more than twenty years. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union did not gradually move closer together, as Golitsyn's thesis suggested they would have; instead, both nations continued to move further apart politically and diplomatically. Finally, such deceptions must be weighed on some reasonable scale of utility: What did such deceptions cost in relation to the benefit provided? For example, by acting as if there was a rupture in relations with Albania, the Soviet Union had to forgo the use of valuable air, submarine, and intelligence-gathering bases. This seems an extremely high price to pay for what was mainly a rhetorical benefit. In any case, neither the alleged Yugoslav nor Albanian deceptions received much serious attention by U.S. intelligence after initial analyses failed to provide supporting evidence.

The third deception Golitsyn presented was far more stunning—both in scope and ramifications. It postulated that the Sino-Soviet split was in fact an enormous fabrication by the K.G.B.'s Department of Disinformation. He told the C.I.A. about this strategic deception late in the summer of 1963, after returning from a trip to England. The logic paralleled that of the other deceptions. Golitsyn argued that the U.S.S.R. and China had simulated both the ideological dispute and the withdrawal of Soviet technical advisers to allow China the opportunity to get Western credits and technology. The sham would also serve to disguise Soviet military developments as moves directed against the Chinese Communists, and thus not overly alarm the United States or Japan. The evidence Golitsyn provided included names of K.G.B. personnel who had remained in China.

As it turned out, the C.I.A. was able to find some data that supported the thesis of continued covert cooperation (although Golitsyn does not mention it in his book). Through the close monitoring of Soviet radar and other electronic intelligence during the Vietnam War, the N.S.A. and C.I.A. reportedly were able to trace, as if by a barium test, the flow of intelligence concerning American bombers from the U.S.S.R. to China. The conclusion was that the Soviets, ideological rhetoric notwithstanding, were turning over substantial and valuable intelligence to the Chinese. Furthermore, in the late 1960s an impressive degree of Sino-Soviet cooperation showed up in the shipment of military goods to North Vietnam. In short, in intelligence and military matters, China and the Soviet Union were not acting as implacable enemies.

This evidence, although it further fueled the debate in the C.I.A., proved inconclusive. Covert cooperation in the economic, military, and intelligence sphere does not preclude the possibility of a political split. In southern Africa, for example, there is considerable covert technical, economic, and even military cooperation between South Africa and its outspoken enemies in Black Africa. It would be ludicrous to conclude from these secret relationships, however, that the enmity over apartheid is some deception designed to attract foreign aid. Even enemies find areas in which cooperation is mutually advanta-

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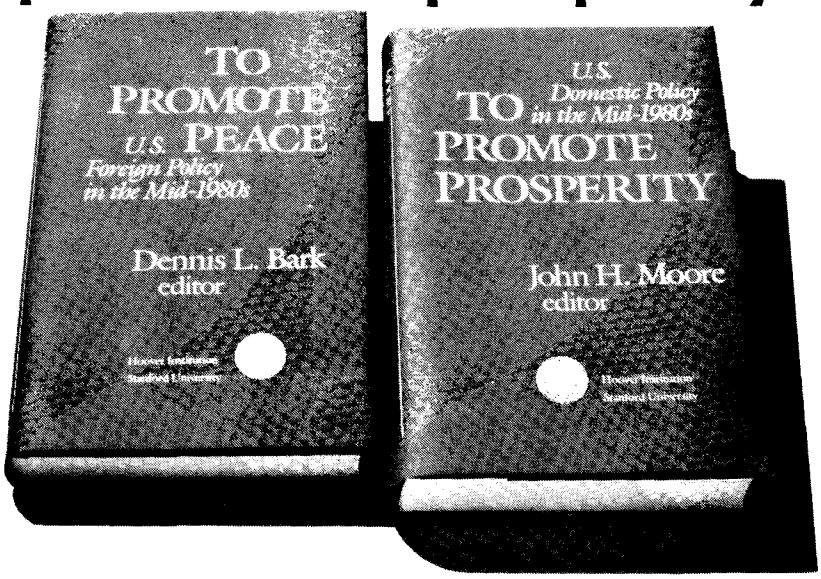

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Tough-minded and candid, these essays provide a rich amalgam of criticism of current policies and prescriptions for prosperity in today's intricate world. Beginning with recommendations for the addition of an Economic Bill of Rights to the Constitution and a possible end to the Federal Reserve's power to create money, and extending to an analysis of the Social Security system that challenges official forecasts, the hardheaded thinking in these essays is essential to longlasting prosperity. Among the contributors: Martin Anderson, Milton Friedman, Sidney Hook, and Rita Ricardo-Campbell.

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geous. Conceivably, the Vietnam War was such an area for the Soviet Union and China.

In any case, the eruption of a border war on the Ussari River in 1969, with Soviet and Chinese troops shooting at each other, also fatally wounded Golitsyn's thesis. Satellite reconnaissance had already determined that Soviet rockets were indeed aimed at Chinese targets. With the Nixon Administration preparing for an opening to Peking, and the creation of a "Chinese card" to play against the Soviet Union, C.I.A. Director Richard Helms told Angleton that while Golitsyn's theory still held some "intriguing complexity," it directly contradicted the thinking and planning of the government.

Golitsyn's final assertion of deception concerned dissidence inside the Soviet Union. As in the earlier case of the Trust, Golitsyn maintained that Soviet intelligence manufactured, manipulated, or ultimately controlled the internal opposition. The goal of this continuous deception was to persuade Western elites that the Soviet Union was evolving along the lines of Western liberal governments; therefore U.S. policies aimed at isolating the Soviet Union, and denying it credits and contacts with the West, retarded this movement toward convergence. By establishing dissident spokesmen, the K.G.B. also incidentally established useful channels to Western journalists—who had ceased finding official spokesmen credible.

The crux of the disinformation was, however, not what the dissidents said but the illusion that an outspoken dissident movement could exist in the Soviet Union. If Soviet dissidents were free to have repeated contacts with the Western press, the Soviet Union could not be completely totalitarian, and there could be reasonable expectations that opposition would develop. In such a deception, individual dissidents could be sincere—as many members of the Trust undoubtedly were—and unwittingly "controlled" by the information passed to them by covert collaborators. The net effect would be that the entire movement would be at the disposal of the K.G.B.

Since other K.G.B. defectors had already established that meetings between Western journalists and Soviet citizens ineluctably came under both passive and active surveillance, the C.I.A. accepted Golitsyn's contention that dissident activities in the Soviet Union were scrutinized by the K.G.B. The question that remained was why the K.G.B. permitted these meetings to continue. Was the dissident movement too strong to be blocked? Or was it, as Golitsyn argued, being used to manipulate the Western perceptions of the Soviet Union? After Angleton was forced out in 1973, the C.I.A. adopted the less conspiratorial explanations, and began contacting dissidents—with, as it turned out, disastrous results. The dissident who was approached turned out to be a K.G.B. agent.

New Lies For Old represents something of a milestone in intelligence publications. Not only does it reveal for the first time the names and functions of individual Soviet deception planners, but it suggests possible over-arching policy objectives of the K.G.B. machinations. Unfortunately, this universe of deception cannot be easily substantiated through documentary evidence. Golitsyn himself doesn't shed much light on the provenance of his sources. Nor does he adequately explain the conditions under which he, as a junior officer, knew about such secret strategic planning.

Indeed, the book tends to declare rather than prove these subterfuges. Part of the problem is that *New Lies For Old* is merely the last half of a twelve hundred-page manuscript that Golitsyn submitted to his publisher. In the first part, which I read in the publisher's office, Golitsyn documents, with names, meetings, and dates, the preparations within the K.G.B. for large-scale deception. After reading it, I was persuaded that Golitsyn did indeed have an extraordinarily important insight into Soviet strategic planning. He convincingly demonstrates that the K.G.B. was specifically reorganized in 1959 for the pur-

Certain Cells

This morning in the early dark, one eye went cold,
the right eye, on its own. I thought of Cora
and her letters asking me: where are you? who sings?
who cooks potatoes Tuesday? is this letter new?
Winters, after dinners in an overheated house,
we ran into the basement, to a locked door,
the cold-cellar with a cork, a peghole
I unpegged when I was ten, and out poured air,
the dark column, a serious and a tuberous
chill. I put my right eye to the hole, but
never saw a thing. Whatever they had in there
kept—that's how it worked. And yet this morning,
the place that had been hidden many years
collected in the dark, as sure as Cora's
madness. I can't remember what we ate.
Who cooked? Who husked the corn? Some necessary
matters—chairs, months, the middle of the day—
have disappeared. There aren't gardens anywhere.
So say it's January. That might explain
the coldness of the eye, the dark continuing
forward into day. I'm sure I recognize the air,
unearthed, damp as tongues, where Kennebec
potatoes in their sacks, like certain cells
gone wild, sprout eyes out of themselves
and, groundless, root their crazy way down.

Janet Kauffman

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poses of executing long-term deception plans; that ultra-secret lines of liaison were established with China and other bloc regimes; and that the K.G.B. think tank did scenarios for shammed dissidence based on the Trust. Whether or not such deceptions were in fact ever executed is a far more problematic question, and Golitsyn's claims of a fabricated Sino-Soviet and Yugo-Soviet split still seem at best highly speculative extrapolations.

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

Edward Jay Epstein is the author of *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* (McGraw-Hill) and a number of other books. He is currently completing a book on international deception.

ONE WOMAN'S WAR

War in Val D'Orcia: An Italian War Diary 1943-44 by Iris Origo

(David R. Godine, 239 pp., $14.95, $8.95 paper)

"A gifted, sincere and I think rather charming young woman . . . wants more than anything to meet you . . ." Virginia Woolf wrote to Ethyl Smyth on January 16, 1936. The young woman was "Marchesa Iris Origo, daughter of Lady Sybil Lubbock (Villa Medici Florence)," and Virginia arranged a tea party for the meeting later on in the month. It is a far cry from the Bloomsbury of 1936 to the Italy of 1943; the opening sentence of the Marchesa's diary for January of that year runs: "The first refugee children have arrived." This record, written down day by day, goes all the way to July 5, 1944. At that point the Germans have retreated to the north, leaving devastation behind them; the Allied armies have followed on their track, "and now," the entry begins, "at once, we must begin again. On the first day Antonio set the men to reaping."

The diary, published in England in 1947 and now in its first American edition, is an extraordinary document. It was printed exactly as it had been written down, without editing or retouching. "I felt at the time," she writes, "and feel now, that any interest this diary might have would come from its being an immediate firsthand account. I put down each day's events as they occurred as simply and truthfully as I could. . . . "

Even at the best of times, keeping a diary regularly can be a demanding discipline, often evaded by procrastination and sometimes simply forgotten, but 1943-44 in Val D'Orcia was not the best of times. "During the most eventful periods . . . it was often difficult to find time to write at all. Some passages were hurriedly scribbled at night, others with twenty children in the room—and some in the cellar during the shelling." The diary was not only demanding, it was dangerous.

> During the first few months . . . it usually lay among the pages of the children's picture books; since I believed that the nursery bookshelf would probably be one of the last places to be searched. Later on most of it . . . was buried in tin boxes in the garden. But the current pages were naturally always in the process of being written even up to the end, with the Germans in the house and (since even in times of danger the careless remain careless) were apt to be lying about in undesirable places.

It was a wonder that it was written to start with, and a wonder too that it survived; German paratroops, the last occupiers of the house, stole everything that took their fancy and deliberately destroyed much of sentimental and personal value. "Every drawer of my writing desk has been ransacked and stained or torn-up photographs, torn out of their frames, strew the floors. . . ." But survive it did, to preserve a record of war seen from below, by the civilians whose homes and places of work are its theater and who are themselves regarded by the combatants as an obstructive nuisance at best and at worst a victim to assuage the

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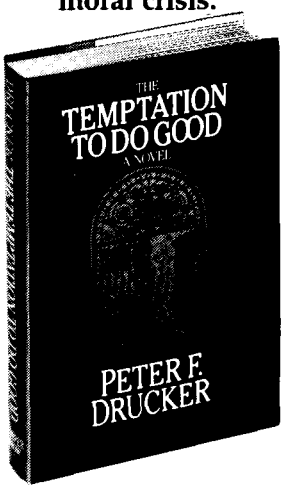

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frustrations of defeat, or—as in the case of the Goums who in the Val D'Orcia raped girls and women and an old woman of 80—to serve as the prize of victory.

When the diary begins, the writer realizes that events have taken a decisive turn. The refugee children are from Genoa, one of the first targets of the Allied air raids: "everyone in Italy is saying: 'Now it's come, now it's our turn.' " But she has no premonition of what is still in the future—of the German occupation of Italy, the massive destruction inflicted by Allied air raids and the stubborn fighting on the ground, of the final days with German artillery batteries round her house and paratroopers manning machine guns in the garden. In January 1943 the Italian Army, though in retreat, was still fighting in Libya; it seemed inconceivable that the war would come all the way to La Foce, the Origo estate in the Val D'Orcia, south of Siena. The estate, as the author explains in an eloquent preface, was large—fifty-seven farms centered on the villa—and was worked on the Tuscan system known as *mezzadria*.

> The landowner builds the farm house and keeps it in repair; he supplies the money to buy half of what is needed to cultivate and improve the land. He pays for half of the stock of cattle. When harvest comes, owner and farmer share the crops.

This institution, ubiquitous in Tuscany since the thirteenth century, was not destined to survive the war and its aftermath. It was swept away in the breakdown of traditional relationships caused by the war and was in any case not compatible with the mechanization of agriculture. But its remarkable longevity speaks volumes for its efficiency. It was, Iris Origo says, "a partnership," and as the pressures of war, defeat, and German occupation mounted, the partnership at La Foce became very close. "Together we planned how to hide the oil, the hams and cheeses, so that the Germans would not find them; together we found shelter and clothes for the fugitives who knocked at our door. . . . "

For the first seven months (January to July 1943) the diary is a fascinating account of the disintegration of the Fascist regime as defeat in Africa was followed by invasion, of the ineffectual maneuvers of the monarchy and the army in a situation that called for courage and decision, and finally of the German occupation, which made all Italy, from Sicily to the Po, a battleground, a land of blown bridges, shattered buildings, and mine fields. By September 12 German troops had arrived in Montepulciano, the nearest town. And from this point on the main preoccupation of the Origos is the constant stream of men and women on the run who pass through the valley: British prisoners captured in Africa and left to their own devices when their Italian guards went home; Italians from units that surrendered to the Germans, escaping internment in Germany; Italian Jews avoiding the S.S. round-up squads; Italian youths fleeing conscription or forced labor—not to mention Moroccans from the French Expeditionary Force, Brazilians, and "Boers who can speak no European language at all" (presumably Afrikaans-speakers from the South African Armoured Division). There were even Austrian deserters from the German Army on their way north. All of them were sheltered, fed, hidden (one Jewish family in a Catholic convent), or sent on their way to the frontiers or to try to pass through the lines, with directions, food, and clothes.

SUCH GENEROSITY to fugitives was wide-spread in rural Italy. There were some seventy thousand Allied P.O.W.s in Italy at the time of the surrender and nearly half escaped either via France or Switzerland or else by crossing the front to rejoin their own troops. The British general O'Connor wrote to the Marchesa after the war:

> . . . the Italian peasants and others behind the lines were magnificent. They could not have done more for us. They hid us, escorted us, gave us money, clothes and food . . . all the time taking tremendous risks.

The Origos, too, were taking tremendous risks. They soon became aware that their hospitality was no secret. "Do you realize," the Marchesa is asked by two English escapees, "that for the last fifty miles everyone whom we have asked for help has sent us on to you? Hadn't you better be careful?" Five days after the entry recording this conversation she writes:

> Spent the morning trying to alter the date of birth on the identity card of a young deserter who turned up this morning and firmly demanded this service—with the same confidence with which others have asked for a clean shirt or some food.

It was not long before a threatening article appeared in the official Fascist

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paper of Siena. The Origos successfully turned for aid to, of all people, the German consul and vice-consul at Florence, Wolff and Wildt, who "have probably done more than any Italian in the last few months of the occupation, to save innocent people from the Germans." Another German is mentioned in the same tone—Heydenreich, the archaeologist responsible for preserving the art treasures of Tuscany. Besides moving the bronze doors of the Battistero back to Florence from the tunnel where they had been stored, he succeeded in having Siena declared a "hospital city" protected from bombing. "He speaks with respect and liking of his opposite members of the Allied Commission, Kenneth Clarke and Woolley . . . a queer, comforting conversation, a reminder of eternal values which may outlast the present madness."

But the present madness was far from over. Rome fell to the Allies on June 5, 1944; and on that same day German officers appeared at La Foce to requisition quarters for troops. The front was moving closer. The situation was complicated by the presence in the woods of partisans who seemed to do very little to hamper the Germans but endangered everyone by their presence and occasional small actions. Before long, however, the villa was occupied by paratroops—"the most complete set of ruffians I have ever set eyes on"—and as the artillery fire reached a crescendo and the Germans demanded the cellar where the Origos and the children had taken shelter, they started out to walk eight miles on mined roads through shell fire to refuge in Montepulciano. They were "sixty in all, of whom four were babes in arms and twenty-eight others children." (One of the babes in arms was the Marchesa's daughter, barely 1 year old.) They all got there safely, but the events of the days of battle prompted a bitter but just reflection in the diary.

> This glimpse of a tiny segment of the front increases my conviction of the wastefulness of this kind of warfare, the disproportion between the human suffering involved and the military results achieved. In the last five days I have seen Radicofani and Contignano destroyed, the countryside and farms studded with shell holes, girls raped, and human beings and cattle killed. Otherwise the events of the last week have had little enough effect upon either side; it is the civilians who have suffered.

So Virgil, many centuries before, mourned for an Italy torn by war—*fas versum atque nefas; tot bella per orbem/tam multae scelerum facies* . . . "here right and wrong are reversed: so many wars all over the world, so many shapes of crime. The plough is denied its due respect, the farmers are dragged off, the furrows rot. And the curved pruning hooks are forged to make unbending swords." But our last glimpse of the Origos is at the work of reconstruction.

> In Chianciano, where Antonio is working all day, the problems are numerous: lack of diesel oil for the threshing, of water, of light, of sugar and salt and soap, of all medicines or hospital supplies, of any transport. . . . I have formed a women's committee, have issued an appeal for old clothes of any sort and hope to set up a work room to prepare babies' layettes etc. . . .

It is hard to remember, as one reads the closing paragraphs of this book, that the writer who so quietly assumes fresh burdens after such terrifying experi-

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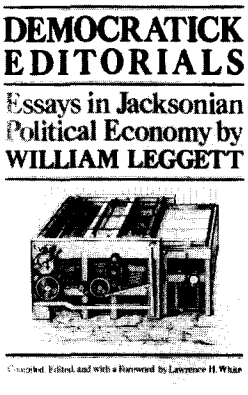

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ences is the woman who was brought up in wealthy homes on Long Island and in London, who later spent fourteen years in the Villa Medici, Cosimo's country retreat outside Florence, moving in wealthy aristocratic society, and who was later to write brilliant books about Leopardi, Bernadino da Siena, Byron and his Countess Guiccioli, and Francesco Datini, the merchant of Prato. *Noblesse oblige*, wrote the Duke de Lévis, who belonged to an aristocracy that had failed signally to live up to the precept and paid for that failure, most of them, with their heads; it was clearly the unspoken creed of the Origos, as they brought their farmers and their families, as well as the refugee children, through eighteen months of hardship and danger and finally led them to safety through the fire of the battle itself.

BERNARD KNOX

Bernard Knox served in the U.S. Army in north Italy in World War II. He is currently director of The Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C.

VANISHING TRIBES

Indian Country
by Peter Matthiessen

(Viking, 330 pp., $17.95)

For almost twenty years, Peter Matthiessen has pursued a vanishing world of wilderness and uninhabited spaces in which man is no more than a sparse, gentle guest. In a dozen books of fiction and naturalist reportage, Matthiessen has written about the Amazon jungle and the plains of eastern Africa; he has tramped across the Nepalese Himalayas, and climbed into the high jungle valleys of New Guinea. No one writes more vividly about the complex sounds and sights of a world without man, or where man blends in uncannily as merely another venture in nature's billion-year experiment.

Matthiessen's knowledge of the botanist's and zoologist's lore is encyclopedic. His descriptions of the African savannah or of the inner reaches of the Himalayas may be the best we have. In such remote places, his writing becomes a poetry of nomenclature in all its whimsy and barbarism, but also its curious splendor, as man casts his net of language upon the fluid rhythms of a world that ignores him, or would if man did not have a power of destruction which cannot be ignored.

While trekking in the Himalayas with the naturalist George Schaller, in quest of the elusive "snow leopard," Matthiessen found streams choked with silt and mountainsides denuded of their forests: a mournful landscape of dead stumps, ravines slashed by the uncontrolled runoff of spring rains and snowmelt. Even in this legendary remoteness, the open spaces were dying. In their desperate quest for firewood, an expanding population of poor mountain farmers was bringing about irrevocable change in the millennial balance of weather, forest, and wildlife.

Matthiessen the naturalist has also been an elegist, chronicling the decline of an older earth of sparse populations hunting and gathering, or planting according to modest needs, in a ritual of respect for the cycles of the year. It is a gentle picture, maybe a purely invented one, expressing as it does a powerful longing: the dream of a reconciled world.

The opening scenes of Matthiessen's newest book, *Indian Country*, take us yet again into this vanishing world, in this case a part of inland Florida on a clear March morning:

> I walked south from the slash pine strands of the old Loop Road into the scrub cypress and wet prairie that extends southward into the sawgrass of Lostman's Slough. There was no sign of man, no smoke, no intrusive note of inorganic color, and every mile or so I stopped, circling slowly to absorb such emptiness, listening, sniffing the coarse marsh air, aware of the skeleton of ancient limestones through the pale marl at my feet. The sun that rose over the Everglades brought a hard sparkle to isolated hammocks of saw palmetto and groundsel bush, wax myrtle and poison-wood, like dark islets in the yellow sea of grass. Bluebirds and spring warblers were already arriving in the piney woods and hardwood hammocks back there on the Loop Road, but the birds out here on the open prairie were the hardy winter species—a bittern, kingfishers, a red-shouldered hawk, swallows and meadowlarks, a shrike, and always the slow egrets and ibis, in silhouette on the shining eastern skies.

This is the sort of lyrical precision one appreciates in Matthiessen's writing: the sense of limitless space, an elusive population of vividly named species, grasses, sky—whole vocabularies of trees. He bends down to pick up a bronze snail shell, and notices a foot away an "odd white flower" opening suddenly; no slither of scales, no hiss, only "the two white petals of a shining mouth," a deadly cottonmouth, too lazy in the cool March morning to leap and strike.

Here is one of the leftover patches of the former world. But in Florida, paved roads are never far away, and just beyond them are the tract developments, and the brutal dredgings of the Army Corp of Engineers in the Everglades. Barely out of sight are squalid settlements of the Miccosokee and Muskeegee Indians, clustered along a tourist road, where they perform little circus acts of Indian lore, or fight an alligator for a buck. Or else they live in sullen "reservations" where the welfare dole, distributed to them by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, serves as pitiful blood money for a hundred and fifty years of relentless cultural pressure by white society—the illegal misappropriations of Indian land, the forced marches, the raids by troops.

MATTHIESSEN has two subjects in *Indian Country*: the destruction of America's last open land by the grinding pressure of big industry, in particular the energy industry; and the tragic struggle of the last people on the land to preserve their shrinking territories, and even more, to preserve the holy balance of their traditions, linked to the complex, fragile ecology of the land.

Matthiessen has crisscrossed the country, visiting Indian reservations in Florida and Tennessee, New York, California, the Dakotas, the Southwest.

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Among Hopis and Navaho, Cherokees, Mohawks and Muskeegees; among countless remnants of tribes that have left powerful names in the sagas of the American past—Sioux, Apache, Comanche—he has stopped to talk, and found distrustful, secretive peoples, who have learned that there is little to hope for from a white man, even a friendly one. They are struggling to keep old traditions intact, amidst the desolation of rugged territories, hostile white neighbors, and energy conglomerates who often conspire with the Indians' own lawyers to steal the oil and mineral rights of America's last wilderness for pennies an acre.

With patience and impassioned sympathy, Matthiessen has penetrated the "Indian awakening" that has been taking place for more than twenty years on reservations around the country. Repeatedly he has encountered a complex, often bitter political struggle between Indians who have bought the B.I.A.'s offer of welfare money, running water, and electricity—who have moved into tract villages, abandoning traditional settlements located near sacred pools rich with hundreds or even a thousand years of tradition—and recalcitrant, usually minority groups of "traditionals," for whom the B.I.A. (along with other official state agencies) is merely a more cunning face of cultural annihilation. The "traditionals" see the Board, in its apparent solicitousness, as an insidious enemy, whose aim is to put them to sleep as a people, and scatter them abroad into the white melting pot, their claims to the land "terminated," their cultural specificity dissolved into the electronic culture of TV and fast-food chains.

Sometimes the conflict between the "traditionals" and the B.I.A. Indians breaks out into open warfare, as on a remote Mohawk reservation in upstate New York in 1980. The politics of the confrontation, as Matthiessen describes them, are Byzantine. There is an armed camp; barricades go up. One faction forms a de facto alliance with the local police; the county D.A. gets involved, as does New York State's special consultant "on military matters and Indian affairs." The tangle of alliances and personalities is daunting, and Matthiessen tries valiantly to unravel them for us. It is a tragic conflict; both the "traditionals," longing to observe the old "Mohawk Way," and the "Tribals," hoping to manage some integration with white society, live under a destructive shadow. In this wilderness of upper New York State, almost visible from the camp of the "traditionals," a General Motors foundry spews acrid smoke into the air and a Reynolds Aluminum plant wafts "a light warm haze of fluoride effluvium." Matthiessen continues:

> Mercury, Mirex, and PCBs are only a few of the deadly poisons from the industries and municipal outlets that line the banks of the St. Lawrence, all the way upstream to dead Lake Erie. Because of the massive contamination of the region, the near-obliterated landscape of a once beautiful country of great hardwood forests, lakes, rivers, and mountains, immensely bountiful in fish and game, appeared almost sinister in the summer haze.

The Indians are fighting, but they are fighting for a dead land.

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ate story over and over again. In upstate New York, or in northern Arizona, where the Peabody Coal Company conducts the largest strip-mining operation in the world on a Navaho sacred mountain known as Black Mesa; in California, where fragile forest valleys are despoiled by logging companies, with the active complicity of the United States Forestry Service, despite strong Indian claims for the sanctity of the land, and the traditional holy places it contains; in Tennessee, where an economically misconceived dam is built, flooding the ancient burying grounds of the Cherokee Indians, along with one of the last stretches of wild river in Tennessee. In place after place, the rape of the land and the despoiling of the Indians go hand in hand; and all of us are poorer for it. For, in Matthiessen's view, the Indians—those that are left, even half-acculturated, desperately poor, often alienated from their own past—are the spiritual custodians of a relationship to the natural world which we have lost.

The loss may destroy us. The Indians are our conscience; as they are silenced, bought off, discouraged, "terminated," something irrevocable is happening to our country. Those places of silence and ancient emptiness, about which Matthiessen writes so movingly, are vanishing, and with them our own secure place in the world is vanishing too, replaced by factory smoke, by piles of radioactive tailings at the mouth of uranium mines, and by the planet-wide death still barely bottled up in nuclear warehouses. Matthiessen quotes a Wintu Indian woman:

> The white man never cared for land, or deer, or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots, we make little holes. We shake down acorns and pine nuts. We don't chop down the trees, we only use deadwood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me. But they chop it down and cut it up. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. How can the spirit of the earth like them?

Indian Country tells the story of many lost battles, and a few battles won. Every celebration of Indian courage and determination, every injunction barring the destruction of yet another tract of glorious country, gives the measure of what, year by year, is being lost. Matthiessen's story is, finally, an unutterably sad one.

PAUL ZWEIG

Paul Zweig's *Walt Whitman: The Making of the Poet* was recently published by Basic Books.

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MISTRESS OF TRISTESSE

The Collected Stories of Colette
edited and with an introduction by Robert Phelps

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 605 pp., $19.95)

Colette
by Johanna Richardson

(Franklin Watts, 288 pp., $17.95)

Among the writers who have achieved the status of classics, Colette was unique in her unabashed anti-intellectualism. This intelligent woman, an eager reader since childhood and one of the world's most disciplined stylists, had absolutely no urge to speculate about ideas. More surprising, although she was a master at conjuring up the raffish aura of her sybaritic cronies ("grand cocottes," glittering dancers, wealthy lesbians), as well as the places she frequented—the garden of her mother's house in the Burgundian village of St. Sauveur, the dressing rooms of the music halls where she acted—she had no interest in portraying the larger social, political, or even literary life of her days. Admired by Proust, Gide, and, incredibly, François Mauriac, her contacts with them seemed to consist mainly of mutually gallant, if scant, letters. And although her second marriage, at 39, was to a fascinating and politically active man, Henry de Jouvenel, co-editor of the newspaper *Le Matin* (and later a senator and a member of the French cabinet), she designated his enterprises as boring and withdrew into her own writing. It's easy to sympathize with his irritable question: "But is it impossible for you to write a book that isn't about love, adultery, semi-incestuous relations and a final separation? Aren't there other things in life?"

Nevertheless, she was at home in all those crannies of experience that intellectuals often find inaccessible—the unexpected alteration in a familiar face, an ephemeral look of "victorious malice," the mysterious sources of human magnetism, the scent and texture of the physical universe ("sage as downy as a hare's ear")—the domain in which only the senses and intuitions can provide a liberal education. Raised by a mother who would call to her, "Look, be quiet, the bud of the purple iris is opening," Colette learned to prune the lyricism of her nature writing with an inviting botanical exactitude:

> . . . gather the brown gillyflower, ruddy, uncouth, and clad in solid velvet like a digger wasp, presaging the tulip. . . . Do not look for the lily of the valley yet; between two valves of leaves, shaped like elongated mussel shells from which

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> the sovereign odor will soon flow, its green Orient pearls mysteriously grow round . . .

Though most of *The Collected Stories of Colette* are a far cry from the perfection of form, agreeable pace, and sheer pleasure of completeness that we get from her best novels, *Julie de Carneilhan*, *Chéri*, and *The Ripening Seed*, they too are filled with the charm of the French countryside and with many of those national traits that turn ingenuous Americans, reserved Britons, and passionate Italians into lifelong Francophiles. No matter how delicate the subject, Colette is frank, shrewd, concrete, and eminently practical. Her special attraction is that peculiarly French mixture of susceptibility to amorousness plus a built-in aptitude for snapping back to reality; a pang of the heart, a feeling of desertion, never preclude enjoyment of a cup of hot chocolate.

COLETTE does not like to dwell on real devastation or irreversible predicaments. She is mainly hospitable to a French emotion known as *tristesse* (borrowed and reduced to literal banality by Françoise Sagan), a kind of savorable sadness, not remotely approaching tragedy, and usually a prelude to eventual recuperation. Many of the stories here are written under its influence. In "The Bracelet," Madame Hugelier has just received her latest wedding anniversary gift, a necklace with twenty-nine white diamonds. Untouched, her mind drifts to a blue glass bracelet she had when she was 10, a source of delirious enchantment. Eventually, like any French realist, she accepts her age, and the disappearance of childhood's miracles. In "The Cure," the worldly narrator comforts a friend whose lover has left her by doggedly forecasting the stages of distress to which she will have to resign herself until, mysteriously, she feels a "silky and salutary" release

> You will discover, with recaptured wonder, that the light coming through the lace curtains is pink, and that under your feet the rug is soft . . . and the smell of the ripe fruit is exhilarating instead of stifling. You will experience a timid happiness, free of all desire, delicate, a little bashful, self-centered, self-concerned. . . .

In the quizzical ending, the sufferer irrepressibly demands, " 'Tell me more!' Alas, what more does she want? . . . 'What more do I want? Why . . . love, of course, love!' "

It is on the dynamics of love that Colette is a formidable expert, not its mechanics. Like the reserved Marco of "The Kepi," she is no "Madame-how-many-times." Instead, she likes to visualize the transformation a beguiled person undergoes, the innuendos of tone and demeanor, the precise circumstance that marks the onset of indifference. The middle-aged heroine of "The Kepi" (one of the few long stories in this collection) has been separated from her husband; she lives a frugal life in a boarding house, does odd writing jobs to earn her living, and has never had a lover. In a frivolous moment, she answers an ad in a newspaper "personals" column, corresponds with a young lieutenant, and is drawn into a love affair. She grows by turns distracted, arch, rejuvenated, nervous, radiant, and after a few months "a new-style Marco, plump, white, calm . . . answered me in a tone of false modesty, the tone of a greedy and sated proprietress." Finally, she goes one step too far: during her lover's visit, she roguishly plants his peaked soldier's cap, the "kepi," on her head atop a crumpled chemise, humming a military tune; and presto, the affair is over.

There's no doubt that this story would not be half so absorbing if we were not watching the proceedings with the unerring young narrator, Colette herself. (In one way or another, Colette manages to be the heroine of most of her fiction.) A further fringe benefit comes from our knowledge that, as in many of the stories, we are privy to a snatch of Colette's actual autobiography. At this juncture, she is living with her first husband, the unscrupulous "Monsieur Willy" (Henry Gauthier-Villars), music critic and organizer of questionable literary ventures for which he furnished a quick idea and paid a crew of ghost writers a few sous each to embellish into a novel. He locked Colette up for four hours a day to write spicy memoirs of her school days, and as a result she became the best-selling author of the *Claudine* books, and eventually the skilled writer elected to the Academy Goncourt.

If we read enough of her, we cannot help puzzling, after a while, about what exactly Colette saw in all the tawdry amours she documented so meticulously, or in her favored characters, courtesans, and pampered young men, or for that matter in the profusion of face powders, eye shadows, curlers, and collars—the whole purchasable paraphernalia of seduction—that finds a roomy place in most of the plots. But she has said how much alike the professions of writer and courtesan seem to her, both centered on pleasing their clientele, both deliberate in their gestures. Certainly, every aspect of seduction fired her imagination. In novels like *Julie de Carneilhan* and *Chéri*, she has written intriguingly about the lingering of an old love, the repeated capitulation to the same charm.

The *Collected Stories* add up to a more astringent Colette, probably because the possibilities in short fiction reach an end more quickly, and she is too rational to stop often on a plaintive note. Even when it goes awry, love still proves useful as the vantage point from which to assess the bonuses and exasperations of friendship. Colette is amusing in "The Kepi" about the asymmetry in the relation of an older and younger woman, the older one sedentary and vulnerable, meekly accepting beauty hints and moral support from the energetic young narrator. In one of the brief interludes about "My Friend Valentine," Colette summons up, in a few sentences, the somnolent relaxation of an afternoon chat between

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women; and the accounts of her music hall days, like "Grabiche," or even those that are no more than candid camera shots of backstage moments of crisis or gaudy costumery, resound with the grumbling camaraderie of the tired, brassy entertainers.

> We are an ugly lot, graceless and lacking humility; pale from too-hard work, or flushed after a hastily snatched lunch. The rain at Douai, the sun at Nîmes, the salty breezes at Biarritz have added a green and rusty tarnish to our lamentable touring "outer garments," ample misery-hiding cloaks which still pretentiously boast an "English Style." . . . We scurry along, pressed for time, talkative, screeching like chickens. . . .

Like *Earthly Paradise*, Colette's fictional autobiography patched together by Robert Phelps from delectable swatches of her writing, his *Collected Stories of Colette* are a bit random and roving, some only snippets of abandoned first drafts, some deft vignettes like "Châ," a study in contrasts between a decorous little Cambodian dancer ("Châ" means "very-respectfully-yes") and an imperious Frenchwoman in a silver gown, surrounded by her acolytes. The book also includes unquestioned masterpieces like "The Sick Child," a wonderfully empathetic approximation of a feverish boy's imaginary escape from the confinement both of his illness and his mother's solicitude. Astride a scented cloud he floats through walls, seizes the horns of a beautiful cream-colored cow and makes his way back through a periwinkle dawn to his enameled iron bed. Close to death, his visions become freer and more brilliant, but when his health returns he comes down to earth and spends "a night shorn of all marvels, the only night allowed to children whom death lets go, and who fall asleep, assenting, cured and disappointed."

The narrative in "Green Sealing Wax," about a postmistress's wicked disposal of her husband, is inconsequential, but the accompanying memoir of Colette's childhood home is delightful. Anyone who has tried to write will enjoy the preparations of her father, a retired army captain and aspiring author, for the profession that eluded him:

> My father, a born writer, left few pages behind him. At the actual moment of writing, he dissipated his desire in material arrangements. . . . I confined myself to prowling, hungrily, with my mind full of evil thoughts, around all these treasures of stationery. A pad of virgin blotting paper; an ebony ruler; one, two, four, six pencils, sharpened with a penknife and all of different colors, . . . drawing pens no thicker than a blackbird's quill; sealing wax, red, green, violet . . .

The longest of the stories, "Bella Vista," emanates the captivating sense of strangeness that we get from travel, and takes place in a traveler's paradise, the south of France. It is told by an older Colette who has just bought a small vineyard among pines and mimosa. While her house is being made habitable, she takes writing paper, pullovers, and her dog Pati, and establishes herself in an inn near the Mediterranean. She observes the proprietresses, the clean, cordial Madame Suzanne, usually in the kitchen, and the mannishly graceful Madame Ruby, an American who has mastered only the third person singular of the verb "to be" and who seems to have thrown their servant girl into a romantic flutter. The narrator fraternizes occasionally with a Monsieur Daste, who alienates animals—Pati grudgingly holds out "a limp, expressionless paw" to him. She is struck by the lack of contentment in the atmosphere: Monsieur Daste breathes an undercurrent of violence and Madame Suzanne gives way to outbursts of jealousy. The denouement, surprising though it is (Madame Ruby turns out to be a man, Monsieur Daste a parakeet-murderer), does not mean all that much to the reader, but the presence of the charismatic narrator, with her remarkable attentiveness to everything around her, does. We marvel, remembering that a number of well-known novelists of our own day have run out of subject matter, at the way Colette has made use of every encounter, journey, mood; a visit to the corsetmaker can send her to the writing desk. Basking in her legacy of French thrift, she wastes nothing, even the symptoms of her own inevitable aging. About the faithless Willy, who exploited and underfed her, she writes characteristically:

> . . . peace be upon the hand . . . that did not hesitate to turn the key! It taught me my most essential art, which is not that of

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Three Novels: The Blackmailer, A Man of Power, The Great Occasion by Isabel Colegate (Viking). Portraits of British self-made men, their personal pains and social mistakes. (Reviewed 5/28/84)

The Architecture of Death: The Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris by Richard A. Etlin (M.I.T. Press). How the urban cemetery was created and quickly overcrowded. (5/28/84)

Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre by Simone de Beauvoir (Pantheon). A portrait of Sartre in his last sad years in his own words and those of his trusted companion. (5/21/84)

Piece of Cake by Derek Robinson (Knopf). An exciting novel about the fortunes of a Royal Air Force squadron fighting Hitler. (5/14/84)

Civil Wars by Rosellen Brown (Knopf). A large, intelligent novel about one family's life in the aftermath of 1960s activism. (5/7/84)

The Evolution of Cooperation by Robert Axelrod (Basic). Scientific proof, using computers, that it pays to be nice, not nasty, when it comes to questions of accommodating to others. (5/21/84)

Children in Exile: Poems 1968-1984 by James Fenton (Random House). A British poet's evocations of Germany, Cambodia, and other nightmares. (5/14/84)

The Truth That Killed by Georgi Markov (Ticknor & Fields). Inside Bulgaria: a posthumous memoir by the émigré who was killed by an umbrella. (5/14/84)

Jinnah of Pakistan by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford University Press). The first major biography of the subcontinent's lesser known hero. (5/7/84)

Writing in a State of Siege: Essays on Politics and Literature by André Brink (Summit). The difficult life of art under the rule of apartheid. (4/30/84)

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writing but the domestic art of knowing how to wait, to conceal, to save up crumbs . . . change the worst into the not-so-bad, how to lose and recover in the same moment that frivolous thing, a taste for life.

Colette has that capacity rare in literary women (in all women): to give credit to a man who has disappointed them. I can think of only one other, the gifted American writer Grace Paley, whose *The Little Disturbances of Man* shows the same magnanimity. Colette acknowledges that Willy was "orderly and methodical, with a great power of inspiring others." For revenge she simply said mildly that "figures (financial ones) were the source of his deepest pleasures and his greatest guilts."

SETTLED unquestioningly in the physical universe, acquiescent in its laws and caprices, Colette is rarely disposed to make harsh judgments. Part of her appeal is the sense of comfort she exudes. We like to see her characters providing for themselves, dressing for work, taking each other's presence for granted as naturally as animals take the presence of their own species. Her autobiographical heroines are as volatile and voluptuary as the cats who are their intimates:

> The gray cat is delighted that I am on the stage. . . . Three meals a day instead of two! . . . Seated on the tablecloth, she smiles without dissimulation, the corners of her mouth turned up, and her eyes, spangled with scintillating sand, fixed wide open and confident on mine. . . .
>
> O cat of ashen coat! To the uninitiated you look like every other gray cat on earth, lazy, oblivious, morose, somewhat listless, neuter, bored . . . but I know you to be wildly tender, and whimsical . . .

Tempting as this surrender to the senses may be, a reader will still pause occasionally, startled, to recognize Colette's cavalier alternation between loving men and women. Can this writer, alert to the smallest nuances and differentiations in nature, be impervious to so basic an opposition? But it is useless to theorize. Almost immediately, we are diverted by her passion for flowers, her provincial exclamations, her abundant animal health. We read her not to be analytical, but to relearn our first responses; as a text in appreciation of the imperfect earthly paradise.

The very least we expect of a Colette biography are high spirits, but starting with its introduction (which laments the decline of the Palais Royale apartments in Paris, where the novelist made her home for the last three decades of her life), Johanna Richardson's book is mystifyingly schoolmarmish and matter-of-fact. She states that it is the first "full-scale" biography of Colette in English, but its substance is slight and its ambition meager. Many readers would certainly like to know something of what was going on in French literary and artistic circles outside the immediate radius of Colette's sensibility. As a matter purely of local color, how could a biographer not be curious about the ambience of the music halls where Colette mime-danced and became a notorious figure. Did Colette have any serious opinions, beyond her impulsive prejudices? What did she have to say about other writers or the books she was reading? How could Richardson leave out all the contemporary animation of French culture?

THE CRUCIAL experiences of the writer's life have already been dealt with in other biographies, in Colette's reams of articulate nostalgia, in dozens of memoirs, especially the charming and precise one written by Maurice Goudeket, the young man she met when she was 52 and lived with until she died at 81. Richardson only adds secretarial annotations, foraging dutifully for letters, but often not discriminating between the worthwhile ones and those that can be used as fillers for a particular period. She persuades the writer's intimates who are still alive to talk to her, which might have borne fruit if the listener were the least bit colorful, or humorous.

The biography reads as if it were written by one of Colette's camp followers, an academic groupie content to record her comings and goings. Reliable enough on chronology, Richardson is erratic about covering Colette's works, sometimes writing aptly, as on *Chéri*, sometimes cursorily disposing of a novel, like her dismissal of *Les Plaisirs* as a "made" book. She quotes impartially, usually without identifying them other than by name, more than a dozen critics, often with no purpose except to convey vague French compliments like those of Jean Cocteau, Colette's longtime chum: "She has spoken with truth and poetry, of men and animals and plants." (Colette responded that she was too moved to say thank you, but I suspect she would have liked him to work a bit harder on his formulation.)

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Richardson had at her disposal an enormous bibliography, of which she seems to have made the most sparing use. She ranges over Colette's restless movements inside and outside France and introduces a considerable amount of gossip, but the outcome is a thin gruel, not the rich *pistou* native to Provence. There is one scoop she can claim, for which she is indebted to the younger son (by a mistress) of Henry de Jouvenel. According to Reynaud, the liaison between Colette and her teenage stepson, Bertrand de Jouvenel, touched on in previous books as mere rumor, really happened and was the basis for the plot of *The Ripening Seed*, in which a young boy is initiated into sex by an older woman. Since Reynaud has furnished a number of acid comments about Colette, we cannot be sure whether his version is objective truth or the product of pique. But on the basis of circumstantial details, it sounds plausible; and it may serve, in the future, to unsettle the customary lighthearted, noncommittal references to Colette's amorality. This aspect of the novelist, consistent though it may have been with her temperament, endows her with a curiously saddening detachment. Immortalized for her love stories, did she ever, in fact, love anyone deeply?

She certainly seems to have felt considerable affection for her third husband, Maurice Goudeket, who wrote about their first meeting in a way she would have appreciated:

> She looked like a big cat, stretching herself out. I had never . . . heard her bronze voice. . . . Colette had hardly sat down before she snatched an apple from a basket of fruit in front of her and tore it to pieces with her teeth. . . . I poured out her drink, she seemed surprised and gave me a midnight blue glance, ironic and piercing. . . . Something rustic and healthy emanated from her.

Would that Johanna Richardson could write as buoyantly. Admirers of Colette may find some new information and sources in this biography, but when it comes to style and disposition, Colette has met her perfect mismatch in her latest biographer.

ISA KAPP

Isa Kapp writes criticism for various magazines and is working on a book called *Love and Marriage Among the Middle Classes*.

TRB, *from page 6*

far more aggressive role in Nicaragua.

It's also gratifying, through rare, when something happens in the real world that suddenly clarifies or even transforms a formerly muddled matter of public controversy. That happened for me when the d'Aubuisson people charged, after Duarte's victory, that the election was corrupt and therefore invalid because of the C.I.A. involvement. Something clicked. Was the odious Helms right for once?

An official in d'Aubuisson's Arena Party charged: "The election doesn't have any credibility, and the results are a farce. Here it is the C.I.A. who has won the election and not the Christian Democrats." The gentleman exaggerates, of course. But the election *was* corrupted, if not corrupt, and the results *are* tainted, aren't they? The d'Aubuisson crowd, which holds democracy in contempt, has been confirmed in its prejudice. (The Sandinista crowd in Nicaragua, too, for that matter.) The great tense question before the election was whether or not d'Aubuisson and his followers would go along with the results if he lost the election. Perhaps they will, but the argument that they should seems a little hollow after the revelation that their man didn't get a fair shake in the democratic process.

The most pleasing aspect of all in this matter is its small vindication of a notion so often dismissed as hopelessly naïve: the connection between ends and means. When critics of covert activity argue that a nation like ours, which believes in democracy, liberty, and the rule of law, shouldn't abandon its values even for the sake of promoting them in the long run, these critics are often accused of trafficking in aesthetics. It's not a pretty world, the hardnoses say. A great power can't always be simon-pure. No doubt that's true. But here, at least, is a cautionary counter-example. We didn't enhance democracy by subverting it; we just subverted it. If Duarte would have won anyway, we have unnecessarily tainted his victory. If d'Aubuisson would have won—or even if he just thinks he would have won—the intervention will backfire.

I don't see why the United States should *ever* be involved in covertly financing one side or the other in a foreign election. How many functioning democracies are there in the world that we can afford to tamper with them so cavalierly? Openly financing an election itself, even helping to administer it and supervising a count, is a different matter. No foreign-aid money is better spent. But who will trust the United States to be an honest administrator of an election when we are known at the same time for secretly trying to skew the results? In any matter relating to democracy in the Third World, we have advertised that we are not to be trusted.

The problem, the hardnoses say, is blabbermouths. Covert activities would work if they could be kept covert. O.K. It's possible to imagine occasions where secret interference in a foreign election would be advantageous if it could truly be kept secret. As a matter of fact, American policymakers probably have had an intelligent preference in almost all foreign elections. Why not invest in defeating the British Labour Party, with its commitment to pulling out of NATO; or in reelecting our surprisingly staunch French friend, François Mitterrand in France? Surely it's not because we have more respect for the democratic process in a place like Europe than in a place like Central America. In fact, if you have no moral qualms and if you have positive secrecy, there is no reason the C.I.A. shouldn't become the first world-class PAC investing in candidates around the globe. And there's no reason to assume, once it's known to be playing PAC somewhere, that it isn't doing likewise any place else. That's why the secrecy has to be total. Once word gets out about interference in even one country, suspicion is engendered throughout the world, not just in that particular nation.

In order to make C.I.A. PAC work, in other words, we would first have to reestablish our reputation for not doing this sort of thing. Only then could we start doing this sort of thing again. In hindsight, it seems clear that the real function of the Church Committee investigation in the mid-1970s was to make renewed covert operations possible. The main product of the Church Committee was the House and Senate intelligence committees. Were these committees not told about the secret contributions in El Salvador? Or were they told and didn't care? Either way, after so many similar episodes, their value as assurance to the world that we are not doing what we are, in fact, doing, has evaporated. It's time to start over.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Weekend

IN WASHINGTON last weekend the free world met in committee. The occasion was the annual gathering of a group founded in 1981 by American and European neoconservatives, and called, in admirable defiance of conventional political usage, the Committee for the Free World. The list of complaints of those who dislike the group begins with its name, which they find grandiose. But since the claims of such organizations as SANE or Common Cause, to say nothing of PUSH (People United to Save—later modestly changed to Serve—Humanity), which among them appropriate sanity, solidarity, and humanity, make no one blush, I see no reason to get particularly exercised over the expansiveness of the C.F.W. Moreover, I like the resurrection of the term "free world," which once was a usable alternative to its geographical and neutral synonym, "West," but, since Vietnam, has become a term of irony.

THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE on "The State of the Nation—1984" was held in a modest function room at the Washington Hyatt. My first impression upon entering was, "They're all here." The guest list was a roster—*the* roster—of neoconservatism, from Sidney Hook to John Podhoretz, and all generations in between. The B's alone included Berns, Bork, Bukovsky, and Burt. Which led to my next thought: one fanatic Shiite, and there goes an entire intellectual movement. When the President gives the State of the Union, the whole cabinet attends, except for one member who absents himself as a precaution in case the worst happens. I then remembered that Elliott Abrams had told me he would be in Berlin that weekend. Another comfort was the thought that Islamic Jihad wouldn't consider a bunch of intellectuals worth wasting a kamikaze terrorist on.

NEOCONSERVATIVES don't believe that. One thing that unites them is an almost mystical belief in the power of ideas, a belief that led the meeting in several interesting directions. First, a focus on "the culture," meaning the media and other intellectuals. Michael Novak pointed out that one of the remarkable developments of late twentieth-century capitalism is that of the three principal structures that support it, the political and the economic establishments have for the first time come to be dominated by the "moral-cultural" establishment. Its captains may not make the world, but they don't need to: they define it. A second consequence was the relative absence of discussion of deeper, "material" causes. No one made the case that a conservative of the non-neo persuasion—someone like Robert Nesbit—would make for the corrosive effect of *capitalism* on traditional values, associations, and attitudes (like patriotism). Sunday's main speaker, Vladimir Bukovsky, complained instead about such capitalist epiphenomena as affluence, comfort, and fun. The one reference I heard to, say, advertising was an only slightly ironic characterization of television commercials as a welcome respite from the normal ideological drumbeat of network programming. A third consequence of this belief in the power of ideas is a deep sense of intellectual seriousness. In a discussion of neo-isolationism, Eugene Rostow argued that there was nothing particularly neo about American isolationism—indeed, that it is the historical norm. We mistake the exception—a burst of Wilsonianism during World War I and another, somewhat longer, interlude beginning with Pearl Harbor and ending with Vietnam—for the rule. That rule was enforced by the accident of America's blessed physical and historical isolation. I looked around the room again: two hundred years and two oceans, and this roomful of writers is out to undo their consequences. Now, *that* is taking ideas seriously.

HAVING NOT ATTENDED earlier conferences, I wasn't sure how to gauge the mood at this year's. I was informed, however, that though this year was more upbeat than last, the euphoria occasioned by the election of Ronald Reagan had dissipated when Reagan subsequently declined to be Reagan. (I believe it was Ben Wattenberg who, with logic on his side, responded that since Reagan was Reagan he was indeed being Reagan.) Pessimism is so endemic among neoconservatives that it's become an inside joke. At the end of his Saturday luncheon address, in which he favorably compared America's cultural condition to that of a declining Europe, Owen Harries declared that he hoped that he had not depressed the audience with his cheerfulness.

THE INTELLECTUAL SPARK of the conference came in a clash between Irving Kristol and Eugene Rostow: "global unilateralism" vs. liberal internationalism, or, what to do about NATO? Kristol wants the United States to unbind itself from the timidities of its allies and act unilaterally in accordance with its interests, secure in the knowledge that the allies would have to fall in behind afterward. He is, for example, prepared to tell our meddlesome European allies that if they don't stop undermining us in Central America, where they have no interest and we have a large one, we will feel relieved of our responsibility to defend their interests in Europe. (Apropos: on the day that France declared, on page 1 of *The Washington Post*, that it stood prepared to sweep Nicaraguan harbors of American mines, the U.S. Navy was, on an inside page, quietly removing an Exocet missile from the side of a tanker hit by Iraq in the Persian Gulf. Alliance etiquette requires that the superpower undo the mischief of its dependent discreetly, and not vice versa.) Though agreeing with Kristol's premise about the tendency toward irresponsibility among dependent allies, Rostow pointed out that Kristol's policy would amount to shooting ourselves in the foot, since we are not defending Europe out of altruism, but out of the hardheaded realization that Soviet domination of Western Europe would create a catastrophic shift in the balance of power against the United States. Later, Ambassador Lawrence Silberman suggested a domestic version of Kristol's robust unilateralism when he defined bipartisanship as beating the other guy into submission. A worthy sentiment, no doubt, but Rostowian prudence—conservatism?—strikes a visitor as the wiser policy.

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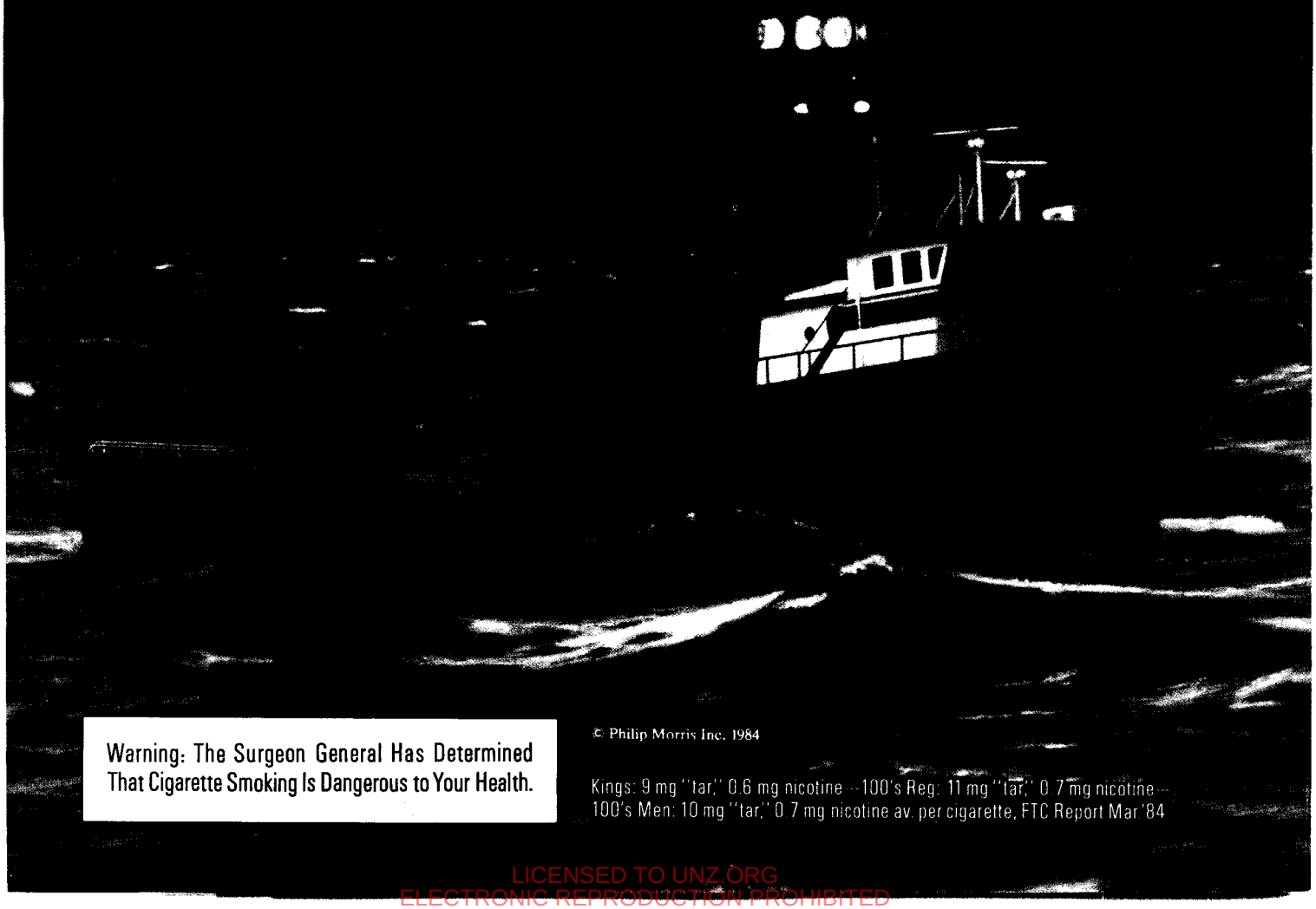

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